



**OFFICE of EQUITY  
and HUMAN RIGHTS**  
CITY OF PORTLAND

City Administrator:  
Michael Jordan  
Interim Director:  
Jeff Selby



March 19, 2025

House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services  
900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights, I, Tatiana Elejalde, Citywide Language Access Program manager and language access subject matter expert, am writing to express our support of HB2976.

The City of Portland is committed to providing language access because it is the law and language justice is a human right. We support HB2976 because increasing language access to people who live in Oregon and speak Indigenous languages is important and those individuals have the right to access interpreters who speak their languages and thus receive the accurate and appropriate language services they need. Language access is a civil right.

At present there exist some barriers in accessing and providing accurate interpreting services in Indigenous languages and supporting this bill is a commitment to supporting concrete actions to remove language access barriers for people who speak Indigenous languages in Oregon.

The proficiency evaluation system created by providing the funding from this bill is important in order to give parity to Indigenous languages. All people in Oregon should be able to access qualified interpreters, in their primary language, when needed. Indigenous interpreters need a process and pathway for receiving qualified designation so they can also be added to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) database of qualified interpreters. Doing so will reduce the delay in care for many Indigenous speakers who have the right to accurate and timely interpretation services.

Pueblo Unido PDX plays a unique role and provides vital services to Oregon community members through the Indigenous interpreters collaborative and their commitment to language justice. HB 2976 will provide funding for this organization to increase access to services for speakers of Indigenous languages.

We support HB 2976 because removing language barriers and increasing access to vital services for people in Oregon who speak Indigenous languages is a commitment to upholding our language access commitments to community and their legal protections under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

*The City of Portland ensures meaningful access to City programs, services, and activities to comply with Civil Rights Title VI and ADA Title II laws and reasonably provides: translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, auxiliary aids and services. To request these services, contact 311 (503-823-4000), for Relay Service & TTY: 711*

With respect to language access in judicial processes and access to health services there are other regulations in place such as section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, the Court Interpreters Act and existing state level laws for providing language access. Supporting this bill will align to these requirements and remove barriers and create access for community members who speak Indigenous languages.

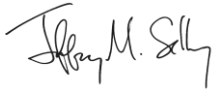
We urge your support on HB2976.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Elejalde, City of Portland Language Access Program Manager, Office of Equity

Handwritten signature of Tatiana Elejalde in black ink.

Jeff Selby, Director, Office of Equity

Handwritten signature of Jeff Selby in black ink.