



Testimony for the Oregon Legislature's Ways and Means Committee

*Presented by Chad A. Ludwig, MSW, ADAC, CDI
April 16, 2025 – Salem, Oregon*

Good evening Chair, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chad Ludwig, founder and executive director and I am here as a proud member of Oregon's Deaf community and as a representative of Bridges Oregon—the *only* statewide nonprofit organization in our state that is linguistically and culturally rooted in serving Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians in their heritage languages, including American Sign Language (ASL), Protactile, and other signed and spoken modalities.

Our communities face unique and significant barriers to accessing healthcare, employment, education, and civic engagement—not because of our disabilities, but because of systemic gaps in communication access and culturally appropriate services.

Bridges Oregon fills these gaps with direct services that are not only linguistically accessible, but also culturally affirming. From advocacy and case management to communication facilitation and community navigation, our staff—many of whom are Deaf or Hard of Hearing themselves—meet clients where they are, with services that honor their language, culture, and lived experiences.

Without sustained and dedicated state funding, this work is at risk. The needs are growing—especially in rural and underserved areas—but the resources are not. We are stretched thin, and yet we continue to show up every day because we know what's at stake: the human right to be seen, heard, and understood.

I urge this committee to prioritize equitable funding for organizations like Bridges Oregon that are not just serving—but empowering—our communities in the languages and cultures that shape our identities and access to opportunity.

Thank you for your time and for investing in an Oregon where *everyone* has a voice.