

April 25, 2025

Sen. Kate Lieber, Co Chair  
Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Co Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Co Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Good evening, committee, my name is Carlos Burgos ,as a Healthcare interpreter, I am testifying today to ask you to prioritize protecting Oregonians and our immediate needs in your state budget, including ensuring fair pay for interpreters and redirecting funds from exploitative private agencies to a more efficient, state-run system.

As an interpreter, I've seen firsthand how critical our work is in ensuring Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients receive the care they deserve. Yet, interpreter companies exploit workers like me, paying us less than 20% of what they charge the government for our services. For two years, I went without health insurance because the wages were so low—and even now, I earn nowhere near a fair share. It's wasteful, and possibly fraudulent, for the state to funnel public funds into these companies when there's already an approved portal that could cut out the middleman, save taxpayer money, and ensure fair compensation for interpreters.

As you build the state budget, we call on you to reject any new Oregon tax breaks for corporations or the ultra-wealthy while workers like me struggle to make ends meet. Please also hold the line on unnecessary cuts that would further harm essential services, especially for immigrant and LEP communities who rely on interpreters for basic needs like healthcare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carlos Burgos  
Oregon AFSCME