



March 9, 2015

Senator Sara Gelsler, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health Care and Early Childhood  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Administration  
681 Center Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
503.588.5828  
503.588.5852 FAX

Connection Program  
503.588.5846  
503.588.5843 TTY

HOTLINE  
503.581.5535  
503.588.5833 TTY  
503.391.5291 FAX  
1.800.560.5535

HOAP  
(Homeless Outreach  
& Advocacy Project)  
503.588.5827  
503.315.0714 FAX

HOST  
Youth & Family Program  
503.588.5825  
503.361.0383 FAX

West Salem Clinic  
Medical  
503.378.7526  
503.585.4278 FAX  
Mental Health  
503.588.5816  
503.588.5803 FAX  
Dental  
503.315.0712  
503.325.0721 FAX

Total Health  
Community Clinic  
Medical  
503.606.3288  
503.606.3287 FAX

RE: **Senate Bill 449**

Dear Senator Sara Gelsler,

My name is Lior Azen and I am a licensed therapist at Northwest Human Services. I am writing to urge you and your Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood to support SB 449 that is introduced by Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson. For years Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians have been unable to receive direct communication access and supporting services from state agencies and businesses because those agencies do not provide the necessary cultural and linguistic competency services, nor can existing budgets of governmental programs begin to accommodate those services. Oregonians with hearing loss encounter daily discrimination, oppression, and barriers to employment and recreation.

As a mental health counselor for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at NWHS, I have clients who are having a difficult time gaining access for their needs and services. I believe that the establishment of a permanent Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians will begin to remove those barriers.

The Office will provide information, referral, advocacy, case management, education, and training, and will serve as the state authority on Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing citizens. It will address the entire range of needs of its clients. It will begin to provide the functional equivalency for employment, recreation, and life that these citizens deserve.

Please support Senate Bill 449.

Sincerely,

Lior Azen, CRC, LPC  
Mental Health Counselor/Case Manager

cc: Oregon Association of the Deaf, Inc.  
file

