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TO: Chair Salinas
Vice-Chair Hayden
Vice-Chair Nosse
Members of the House Committee on Healthcare

FR: Alma Raya, Legislative Specialist, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Oregon AFL-CIO Support for HB 4115

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Healthcare Interpreters are essential for the many Oregonians with limited English proficiency. Currently workers providing these crucial services are experiencing wage and labor violations that cannot be addressed due to the lack of a complaint process. The Interpretation Accountability Act would address this issue, we urge you to support HB 4115.

Although there are qualified and certified health care interpreters by the Oregon Health Authority, some healthcare providers are currently working with uncertified interpreters for low wages. While interpreters want to receive adequate training and certification, it is nearly impossible to cover those expenses without a living wage. These workers are vulnerable to unfair working conditions and are unable to provide for their families. HB 4115 would grant OHA the authority to collaborate with the Bureau of Labor and Industries or the Department of Justice to investigate and resolve complaints and ensure interpretation service companies are in compliance with the law.

Our community depends on these services, healthcare providers including doctors and nurse practitioners also rely on qualified and certified interpreters to provide accurate information regarding a patient's health. The Oregon AFL-CIO believes in a trained workforce and an economy where all Oregonians can thrive. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony, we urge your support of HB 4115.