

**From:** [Sonia Landi](#)  
**To:** [HHC Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of HB 4115 - Qualified Medical Interpreter for Italian  
**Date:** Monday, February 10, 2020 10:33:29 PM

---

***From: Landi Sonia - Qualified Medical Interpreter for Italian***

[REDACTED]

**Portland, OR** [REDACTED]

**To: Chair Salinas, Vice-chair Hayden and Nosse and member of the committee**

**RE: Support for HR 4115**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sonia Landi I am submitting my testimony to support the bill HR 4115 because it is important that an Health Care provider uses only Interpreter who are Certified and/or Qualified in order to ensure an accurate and adequate provision of Health care to patience with Limited English Proficiency.

About that I would share my experience as Medical Interpreter with you: I am an Italian native speaker, I relocated in Portland in 2011 where I live with my husband, who is a Faculty Professor at Portland State University, and our two children of nine and seven years old. I am a US citizen since December 2015 and I feel honored and proud of that, indeed I try to set a good example for my children and I try to volunteer as much as I can in their schools. I am a Qualified Medical Interpreter for Italian since December 2019, mostly I work as an over the phone interpreter since 2017 with Language Line Solutions and occasionally I cover assignments on site in Portland with Passport to Languages. I am in the list of the translators of the Italian Consulate of San Francisco. Occasionally, I work as Localization Quality Assurance for ongoing projects concerning Italian.

I have a background in law, as I worked as a civil lawyer in my native country. After I moved in the States I tried different job options and finally I decided to invest in a career as an interpreter because I saw in this job an opportunity of taking advantage of my skills and experience as a former lawyer, secondly it is a job that has flexible schedules and allows me to work while taking care of my family, finally because it is a job that requires continued education and I constantly aim in improving my skills. My experience as a lawyer turned useful when I started this career because I basically self trained myself, I found out that interpretations agencies here in Portland don't provide a proper training for interpreters and it is hard to find out information in the internet about trainings for which interpreters are required to pay though. The current situation it is concerning, but agencies send interpreters to appointments after they attend a two hours online training, they don't inform interpreters about liability issue, moreover agencies don't prepare properly interpreters about Code of Ethic and HIPAA compliance.

Despite the experience and dedication I devoted in this job, only recently I was able to meet

all requirements for getting Qualified with the OHA because in order to get qualified an interpreter needs to provide, in addition to all documents, a letter from an interpretation agency confirming that he/she has 15 hours of experience as a medical interpreter. Because Italian it is not so requested in Portland it took me almost three years to collect the 15 hours of experience on site. Moreover, I feel frustrated about my Qualification because my language is only "Qualifiable" not "Certifiable". I think this is an injustice operated by the system toward me because despite my experience I will never get the opportunity to receive a Certification as Medical Interpreter for Italian, consequently I will never be entitled to the hourly rates of Certified interpreters. Consequently, I think with these presupposing perspective interpreters of "only" Qualifiable languages turn down this option and decide to invest in career in which they can earn more money and receive proper certifications.

According to the Oregon Statute ORS 656.027 interpreter and translator are the only category of independent contractors who are required to be Qualified and/or Certified and must have continued education yet they are entitled to low hourly wages despite these requirements, moreover they must pay for expenses such as training, continued education and insurance.

Hourly rates are very low, and even after interpreters get Qualified and/or Certified agencies only increase the hourly rate of few dollars. This bullying behavior of agencies not only is disrespectful toward our category but it has also the downside effect to do not motivate interpreters in investing a big amount of time and money in getting Certified and /or Qualified because it is not appealing to them. Secondly, low hourly rates create an additional situation of inequality for working women/mothers like me. Indeed, often I am forced to turn down appointments which are scheduled out of school hours because the money I would earn wouldn't be enough to cover the expense of my children's babysitting.

Cancellation policy is the most unfair policy shamelessly perpetrated by agencies against interpreters, about that I would like to list different hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** If an interpreter is booked for a three hours appointment but then the provider cancels the appointment the interpreter only gets paid one hour despite the fact that the interpreter turned down other appointments for being available for the cancelled one.

**Hypothesis 2:** If the interpreter is assigned a four hour appointment, but the appointment only lasts two hours, then the interpreter gets only paid for two hours, even though she/he was booked for four and despite the circumstance the interpreter turned down others appointment for being available to the appointment for which was booked.

**Hypothesis 3:** If an interpreter takes a three hours appointment and for some reason such as family or health reasons the interpreter needs to give back the appointment the agency will charge the interpreter for the whole amount of the three hours appointment.

Therefore, if the provider cancels the appointment the interpreter get only paid one hour, however if the interpreter needs to cancel the appointment in that case he/she is forced to pay back the amount concerning the whole appointment. Is that fair? In this unfair process let's talk about how agencies required interpreters to attend yearly and mandatory trainings of compliance for which they don't pay the interpreters for the time they spent in the training and the internet or computer expense.

Moreover, recently Providence required the interpreters to be in compliance with

vaccinations and drug test. Concerning the vaccinations interpreters had to pay for vaccinations and/or blood test in order to avoid some vaccinations. Moreover, interpreters were required to do the drug test specifically at clinics affiliated with Providence for a total amount of \$ 35 for each interpreter. Interpreters who didn't have health insurance were forced to get their vaccinations to different facilities of Providence located in Portland, and of course all interpreters had to pay Providence for the drug test, other the time they spent to travel to the facilities and additional travel expenses. I think it is a shame that Providence charged the interpreters for this expenses and getting a significant profit on them.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony, and I would like to address a prey, please support our category in protecting our rights. The reason why most of us choose this career is because it is a dynamic and interesting job that allows us to help people. Yes, indeed our category helps to facilitate the communication between Limited English Proficiency, most of the time are poor immigrant or elderly people who need to communicate with a doctor or social worker.

Thank you. Sincerely, Sonia Landi

Qualified Medical Interpreter

████████████████████