



March 2, 2021

Dear Representatives Salinas, Ruiz and Frederick and Representatives Leon and Nosse,

My name is Elise Mongeon and I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ORID) as current President. As an organization which advocates with sign language interpreters in solidarity with the Deaf community in the State of Oregon, we assert our support of HB 2359 and urge you to pass this bill.

The passage of this bill will ensure that the Deaf community, a linguistic minority, receives the highest quality of interpreting services possible by requiring the hiring of those who have already been vetted and credentialed by the State of Oregon, specifically Oregon Health Authority. Maintaining this level of accountability from not only individual interpreters, but from those who hire interpreters, will greatly increase the success of interpreted medical interactions, therefore mitigating risk involved when hiring unqualified or uncredentialed interpreters.

Interpreters who are currently qualified or certified with OHA are often bypassed when interpreting requests are made, inherently causing more harm and increasing the chance for errors, both linguistic and ethical. Those of us who are credentialed with OHA have invested the time and energy to ensure effective communication occurs during our work. Unqualified, uncertified interpreters are still often given priority, which is fundamentally dissonant with the goals of the Healthcare Interpreter credentialing program.

Those who are currently credentialed with OHA have gone through the linguistic, ethical and situational training to provide optimal interpreting services for patients throughout the state. By bypassing those who do not have this training, patients' safety and lives are put at risk, not to mention liability risk to providers by not providing qualified interpreters.

Oregon Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf supports HB 2359, requiring health care providers to work with health care interpreters from the health care interpreter registry operated by OHA to provide interpreting services.

Sincerely,

Elise Mongeon, MA, NIC, OCHI, CoreCHI
President, Oregon Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
pres@orid.org

And ORID board:

Saamanta Serna, Vice President
Sandy Pascual, Secretary
Brandon Heaps, Treasurer

Susan Quinn, Member-at-Large #1
Laurielle Middleton-Aviles, Member-at-Large #2