

March 3, 2021

To: House Committee on Health Care

Re: Letter supporting HB 2359

I am a qualified health care interpreter and my languages are remote and work consistency is very low. Working in Oregon for five years as a healthcare interpreter, I would like to share my experiences as an interpreter and why I support HB 2359.

I constantly heard lectures from all sections that healthcare interpreters need to invest time and money to take training, follow the ethics, the best practices, and so on, yet I have regularly seen interpreters with no credentials being used to interpret in healthcare settings. It took me a while to apprehend that Oregon only acknowledges credentialed OHA registered interpreters as healthcare interpreters. What is the need for investing time and money to get credentialed and be on the OHA registry if agencies keep using low-cost uncredentialed bilinguals?

The lockdown during the pandemic was an eye-opener. Despite being essential workers, we live as an unprotected community, with no unemployment benefits or worker's compensation adding to the already uncertainty of hours and income. Some local clinics during the pandemic started using out-of-state interpreters for remote appointments. Are they doing justice to state credentialed local interpreters?

Please vote yes to HB 2359 to save the interpreter's community.

Sanjoy Dutt

Qualified Healthcare Interpreter.