

Rep. Rachel Prusak,  
Chair House Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

April 6, 2021

SUBJECT: Support for HB3231, the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

To Chair Prusak, Vice-Chair Hayden, Vice-Chair Salinas, and members of the Committee:

My name is Darcie LeMieux, I am a consumer of ASL interpreting services. I am writing to urge the Committee's support of HB3231.

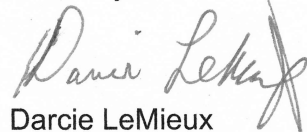
This bill will protect the more than 180,000 Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians in our state by establishing a licensure requirement for Sign Language interpreters. Currently in Oregon, anyone can legally represent themselves as a Sign Language interpreter whether or not they are qualified and can provide services in settings such as: emergency press conferences, drug treatment facilities, emergency medical situations or attorney-client meetings. This may result in unqualified or unethical interpreting services, violating the rights of our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians and potentially causing great harm to consumers. Along with the risk to the consumers, hiring entities including government agencies are at risk of lawsuits if they hire interpreters who are unqualified.

HB3231 will create a State Board of Sign Language Interpreters within Oregon Health Authority, outline requirements for interpreter licensure, establish standards for the profession and by doing this protect consumers and hiring entities by requiring licensure to work as a Sign Language interpreter in Oregon. Over 30 states have established such requirements for Sign Language interpreters and the passing of this bill would ensure Oregon is in line with national best practices.

Recently at one of my surgery appointment, the doctor office hired an uncertified sign language interpreter from an interpreter agency who does not screen to make sure that their interpreters are nationally certified. The interpreter did a poor job as I struggled to understand her and she had a hard time understanding me. I did let the doctor know that this interpreter is not qualified and he assumed the sign language interpreter is certified and qualified as he has used this agency before. This has happened numerous times that should not be happening to me and other Deaf, DeaffBlind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

I respectfully ask for the Committee's support of HB3231 the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill because this law will protect the rights of Oregon's Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Sincerely,



Darcie LeMieux  
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