

ORAL TESTIMONY

To the Co-Chairs Lieber and Nosse and members of the committee.

My name is Chad A. Ludwig, I represent Oregon Association of the Deaf and I submitted a PowerPoint version testimony. It will provide you transparency of my alternate roles in the community. Please take some moment to skim through my PowerPoint presentation as I will not be able to cover all slides, I'd like for you to recognize that Oregon has over 1m population living with hearing loss. The slide 5 will tell you that DHS has a program called "Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services" (ODHHS) and it comes with ORS code on the bottom of the slide. What really offended me that the presenter on DHS APD did not acknowledge the existence of this program in their PowerPoint presentation. There is a supervisor that supervises the LTSS program and this same person supervises ODHHS yet the LTSS was mentioned in the presentation, but not ODHHS. This tells you the government's value toward the community members living with hearing loss. The DHS VR presentation indicated that 10% of their entire caseload work with the individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. This would easily tell you that it is hypothetically possible that the 10% of the entire DHS caseload involves individuals with hearing loss - yet they are neglected and continued to be.

We need to stop this.

The community told you in 2007, 2009, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021 of our needs as indicated on slide 7. There was one exception with 2015 where the HB 449a did not pass however one small portion from this bill was implanted in the DHS bill that allowed the funding for community-based needs assessment which we gave you the result in 2017, 2019, and again today. There has been no action to acknowledge the need to provide service to the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing.

DHS is unable to tell you about this language and culturally marginalized community because they lack centralized data of their clients with hearing loss and I recognize that this testimony may not be relevant to this public hearing yet it is important for the member of this committee to understand there is lack of centralized statewide resources for child welfare employees to work with deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing children and families who are in the child welfare and foster care program. DHS and you are funding an ODDS program that serves over 30k clients with individual needs, yet there are over 1M people out in there that are living with hearing loss and we have told you every year there are needs. This is a problem.

Take a moment to review slide 10 where it will tell you there are no culturally appropriate services available in Oregon that cover specific topics and we can't always depend on ASL interpreter or captioning. As a body of legislature, you already knew and know that there is a chronic issue on accessibility for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing to come here and tell you their experience, problems, and propose solution because of - lack of training, lack of interpreter pool in the community, and inadequate

number of interpreters who are familiar and comfortable with interpreting. This is an everyday barrier for this community. Take a second to step back and think about the every-day, i mean e-v-e-r-y-d-a-y experience among the members in the deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and person with hearing loss have to ensure everyday with dilemma with communication access with wide available resources yet often time they are not familiar, does not have financial resource to provide accommodation, or culturally trained to provide service to this marginalized community as listed on slide 10. The data and narrative written in the community-based needs assessment that you funded in 2015 will continue to support this though it is already 6 years old and this data is still relevant.

All of these challenges in our everyday life will continue until you put in a first step solution, yet we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Can you please join with the language and culturally marginalized community and say - yes, it is time to address this?

The solutions I want for you to take a look is listed on slide 15 and 16. We need to find a way to have SB 5529 to absorb HB 3146 in their Bill. We need to have ODHHS become a state mandate program, this will enable DHS to include this community in their annual report to the Oregon Legislature, right now you didn't hear this in their presentation because they are not required to disclose. This solution will provide DHS more authority to be able to expand its service to serve the language and culturally marginalized community that we have been trying to tell you since 1980's

Oregon is one of twelve westerns states without services and only you can change this.

Thank you!