

February 11, 2021

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Chair  
House Committee on Behavioral Health Care  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Sanchez,

My name is Rian Gayle and I am a Deaf BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) cis-het (Cisgender Heterosexual) male living in Salem Oregon. I am hereby submitting my testimony in support of HB 2585 which supports establishing a bill of rights for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf with other disabilities, and DeafBlind mental health patients.

For many years, research shows that marginalized groups do not get equal access to health care in general and in this case, in regard to the Deaf community where language is also a barrier, it's even worse. Lack of qualified interpreters and trained staff members with knowledge about working with patients with disabilities, especially those who are Deaf and Hard of hearing, is usually a huge problem. There are often times no structures in place to deal with the problem when a complaint is made or suggestion is made to improve the services. That often leads to the lack of or unsatisfactory result after a long wait period. This factor further contributes to the already declining mental health state of patients with hearing loss. The decline gets steeper when the person is also a BIPOC.

As a BIPOC person, I have tried in the past to find quality service with quality access and it's near to impossible. I usually have to settle with less than and this often leaves me feeling I do not get the help I needed. Statistics shows that mental health impacts BIPOC with a mental health disability at a higher rate than other races. As a result of that, many crises happen which also involves interaction with law enforcements that often turns deadly. BIPOC with a disability should not have to face another barrier beside a system that is already destructive to their wellbeing in general.

Voting yes on this bill would not only be a life safer but also help remove one more stress for a marginalized group that is already struggling gravely especially in this time of pandemic and unrest where they need increased support. Thank you for listening to my testimony, and please vote "yes!" on HB 2585.

Sincerely,



Rian Gayle, MA  
Community advocate  
1310 25<sup>th</sup> St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301