



February 10, 2021

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

Dear Representative Sanchez, and the Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health Care,

On behalf of Oregon Association of the Deaf (OAD), My name is Steven M Brown, and I am here to write the testimony as Vice President.

Over 186,000 Oregonians are living with hearing loss. Hearing loss is an “invisible” disability. It is easily overlooked, and underserved. Oregonians with hearing loss are underserved. For years, they have been unable to receive direct communication access and education from state agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses because those agencies do not provide the necessary cultural and linguistic competency services, nor can existing budgets of governmental programs begin to accommodate those services. Oregonians with hearing loss encounter daily discrimination, oppression, and barriers to employment and recreation. House Bill 2585 will begin to remove those barriers.

House Bill 2585 will provide an opportunity for Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to investigate and make recommendations for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians with mental health needs to receive the best quality of therapeutic services in Oregon. The advisory committee will provide information, education, and training, and will serve as the state authority on Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians with mental health needs. It will address the entire range of needs of its clients, a range of needs that spans from the birth to the grave. It will begin to provide the functional equivalency for employment, recreation, and life that these citizens deserve.

Please support House Bill 2585 with “**to-pass**” recommendation.

Sincerely,


Steven M Brown, Vice President of Oregon Association of the Deaf
2314 SE Brooklyn Street
Portland, Oregon 97202

cc: Oregon Association of the Deaf, Inc.
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