

SB 1562 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Action Date: 02/10/22

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Hansell, Jama, Knopp, Lieber, Taylor

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/8, 2/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Permits the Health Licensing Office to issue signed language interpreter licenses to qualified applicants for supervisory, provisional, educational, medical, and legal signed language services. Specifies the requirements to be a qualified applicant related to the type of license issued. Defines key terms. Prohibits a person who is not licensed from providing signed language interpretation services except under specified circumstances including circumstances in which a license is not required, emergency situations, and other extenuating circumstances to be determined by the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters. Prohibits the employment of an unlicensed signed language interpreter for the purposes of providing signed language interpretation services. Prohibits requiring a licensed signed language interpreter to disclose information protected by confidentiality, privilege, or privacy laws without the consent of the individual for whom the signed language interpretation service was provided. Establishes the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters within the Health Licensing Office and specifies the composition, term, and duties of the members of the board. Provides a Class C misdemeanor for violation of any provision of signed language licensure requirements. Becomes operative on January 1, 2023. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need to ensure qualifications of signed language interpreters
- Risks to deaf individuals from unqualified interpreters in medical settings
- Number of states that require licensure for interpreters

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon law governs the use of interpreters in various settings, including health care, judicial proceedings, and education. Interpretative language services can be provided onsite or through remote means (e.g., telephonic or remote video).

The Oregon Health Care Interpreter (HCI) program was created in 2010 to require the use of certified health care interpreters or qualified health care interpreters whenever possible to ensure accurate and adequate provision of health care to persons with limited English proficiency and to persons who communicate with sign language. The HCI registry hosts two interpreter groups, spoken and sign language, who are recognized as qualified or certified. Not all spoken languages have certification exams, unlike sign language, which has the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification exam.

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) operates the Court Language Access Services (CLAS), which coordinates interpreting services in Oregon circuit courts for people with limited English-proficiency in more than 170 languages and the hearing-impaired in most judicial districts statewide. OJD operates an American Sign Language

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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Oregon Certified Court Interpreter credential, which requires an individual to have a valid "legal specialist certificate" from the RID.

The Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services program, administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services, provides interpreters for students in K-12 who are members of the deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing communities. The State Board of Education has a set of standards for sign language interpretive services.

Senate Bill 1562 establishes license requirements and licenses for qualified individuals to provide signed language interpretation services and establishes the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters.