

Jan. 31, 2023
Rep. Lisa Reynolds
Chair House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE, Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support HB 2664 Bill of Rights for child welfare services for individuals who are Deaf DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing.

To the Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf, and members of the committee.

My name is Adam Logan, I am secretary for the Oregon Association of the Deaf (OAD). The OAD board has voted unanimously to publicly support HB 2664, and by extension we urge the committee to support this bill.

The Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Foster Children's Bill of Rights is a responsibility statement to ensure the ODHS meets the unique needs of individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in their heritage language. This bill provides a roadmap for professionals and agencies in the Foster Care system to provide appropriate referral and care services, including child welfare, legal, medical, psychological, educational, mental health services and more. These individuals deserve equal access to information and services. They are nearly twice as likely to experience trauma (Anderson & Leigh, 2011). Equal access to family preservation services, including state resources for a healthy and safe home environment, is crucial.

I share the following paragraph from our Delegate #1 Julie Reis who is a deaf foster parent.

“ As a community member, I have personally witnessed and heard many stories of deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing children who struggle to succeed in their environment due to a lack of or poor quality communication. This is a serious issue that often results in children falling through the cracks, all due to language deprivation and stigmatization of ASL. To address this problem, I believe it is crucial to have someone who understands the needs of Deaf DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing children from the outset when receiving services. This bill would be an effective intervention to counter language deprivation by prioritizing communication accessibility. ”

I respectfully ask your support for House Bill 2664 to give Oregon's Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing citizens the best chance at healthy development in a safe environment and facilitate linguistically and culturally affirmative access to services.

Sincerely,

Adam Logan

Adam Logan, Secretary
Oregon Association of the Deaf
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