

Submitter: Philip Wolfe

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2696

February 3, 2023,

The Honorable Representative Rayfield and Senator Anderson
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

Dear Representative Rayfield and Senator Anderson:

My name is Philip J. Wolfe and I am a Sign Language consumer/interpreter/hiring entity who resides in your district.

This Bill protects the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities by establishing a licensure requirement for Sign Language interpreters. Currently in Oregon, anyone can legally represent themselves as a Sign Language interpreter whether or not they are qualified and provide services in settings such as emergency press-conferences, drug treatment facilities, or attorney-client meetings. This results in unqualified or unethical interpreting services, violating the rights of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians and potentially causing great harm to consumers. Along with the risk to the consumers, hiring entities such as government agencies are at risk of lawsuits if they hire interpreters who are unqualified. Licensure will establish standards for the profession, as well as protect consumers and hiring entities by requiring licensure to work as a Sign Language interpreter in Oregon. Over 30 states have established such requirements for Sign Language interpreters and the passing of this bill would ensure Oregon is in line with national best practices.

https://youtu.be/q9Uh9_LXyoA

This whole experience opened my eyes after I moved here in Portland and I realized that our rights for Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing citizens in Oregon are seriously lacking, which is why I was in this situation in the first place. Furthermore, the court still failed to implement 640.40 directive policy which supposedly protects us Deaf/DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing citizens from being killed by police. They promised me ten years ago and this policy is still not being implemented to this day and this problem continues to today. How many more do we need to suffer because this system continues to fail us? Please take this seriously and implement this at once. Our lives are at stake. I beg of you to see us and understand our perspective. So with that being said, I respectfully ask you to support the Oregon Sign Language

Interpreter Licensure Bill because this law will protect the rights of Oregon's Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Sincerely,
Philip J. Wolfe

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