

Rep. Rob Nosse
House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

January 27, 2023

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2696, the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

To the Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and
members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge this Committee to support HB 2696.

My name is Susie Camacho, I am a nationally certified American Sign Language Interpreter and Oregon Health Authority certified medical interpreter, and I am writing to urge the Committee's support of HB 2696.

I am proud and very blessed to have a career that I love, and enjoy going to work each day. However, the reality of my work as an American Sign Language Interpreter affirms that a communication discrepancy exists between Deaf and hearing individuals, a language and cultural barrier that often results in the oppression and exclusion of Deaf individuals. I have been working professionally as a nationally certified interpreter since 2009, spanning the K-12, post-secondary, business, and medical fields. Many times I have arrived to find a Deaf client relieved that a competent interpreter is there they can trust. The creation and oversight of a board of licensure provides a long-awaited avenue for our clients to report poor interpreting services, or unethical services which so often disfavor this marginalized community.

I support this bill which will allow clients to enter their schools, interviews, medical appointments, real estate transactions, and other daily activities without worrying that the interpreter is incompetent or unethical. It is 2023: let's direct agencies to hire competent, qualified interpreters. Let's give professionals incentive to improve their skills and specialize in a field to better serve the Deaf community. Let's cede power to the Deaf, the reason this profession exists at all, and let them submit concerns and complaints to better regulate the profession that can influence their success or failure in education, understanding a diagnosis, or land a job interview.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of this bill.