



February 8, 2023

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Liz Marquez, I am the policy associate at PCUN- Oregon's Farmworker Union. On behalf of PCUN, I am providing testimony in support of SB 584, to ensure our farmworker communities have access to certified and qualified health care interpreters and that we are retaining the workforce that provides this essential service.

As a farmworker union, we strive to improve and protect the living and working conditions of our communities. Part of this mission includes ensuring that they receive proper medical attention both physically and attentively through health care interpretation.

When our communities have access to quality health care interpretation, they are allowed to have meaningful communication with their health care provider. That is why we have been in support of previous bills to ensure health care providers work with qualified and certified health care interpreters. However, the working conditions that health care interpreters face drive interpreters out of the profession, further straining language access in the state. There is still work to be done to ensure that the health care interpreters who provide this essential service are paid fairly for their skills and have better working conditions. That is what SB 584 aims to achieve.

By building an online portal, health care interpreters would be able to collectively set their rates and focus on Medicaid and Oregon Health Plan patients who are some of our most vulnerable Oregonians. SB 584 would also establish a health care interpreter fund to keep interpreters in the profession.

We believe in building a more equitable Oregon that provides quality language access to ensure patients are receiving full care and retaining this essential workforce by hosting a state-based platform so that healthcare interpreters can set their own wages while ensuring providers are contracting with OHA-credentialed interpreters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. PCUN respectfully requests the committee to support SB 584.

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