

Submitter: Nicholas Nguyen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB584

The Honorable Rev. Dr. Deb Patterson
Chair, Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care

The Honorable Cedric Hayden
Vice Chair, Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care

Dear Senator Patterson and Senator Hayden,

My name is Nick Nguyen, and I am an Oregon-based healthcare interpreter in the Vietnamese language. I write to oppose Oregon Senate Bill 584. This bill would require the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to develop a web-based platform to support the scheduling and payment of interpreters for language access for Oregonian health care patients, essentially replacing many of the language service providers (LSPs) that currently service Oregon patients, and employ interpreters like me.

I oppose this bill because replacing LSPs would unintentionally result in the loss of the following benefits for many interpreters like myself:

- Section 1557 of the ACA - LEPs may not get timely access to language services, which will reduce the quality of healthcare. This could negatively affect the quality of healthcare of LEPs seeking treatment and will create more risks for violating section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, quality standards and put more strain on an already overwhelmed healthcare system.
- Executive order 13166 - On August 11, 2000, the President signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP). This would not be feasible with the significant reduction in interpreters especially for lesser diffused languages. For the limited number of interpreters that would remain, they would suffer from burn out trying to meet the demands of an already overwhelmed healthcare system.
- Loss of Liability Protection – In order to participate in medical translation, Interpreters like myself assume risk. LSPs help mitigate that risk and provide protection via the service providers' insurance policies and comprehensive credentialing procedures. Navigating these complexities can be daunting for individual interpreters.
- Loss of Education and Career Advancement – LSPs typically provide high-

quality training and educational resources that are foundational in advancing interpreter careers and expertise, at no cost or at a drastically reduced cost to the interpreter.

- Loss of Consistency of Income – Instead of being able to interpret for several LSPs, I will be dependent on one client (the OHA) to provide all my assignments in Oregon. As a result, it would also seem that I would be dependent on OHA to set my compensation rates, though the bill's current language does not account for this.
- Loss of ability to work remotely – The current bill does not appear to support remote interpretation in any form. Remote work provides the kind of flexibility that allows some interpreters to work when they would otherwise be could not.

The intent of this bill appears to be the improvement of working conditions for Oregon-based medical interpreters. As it is written, bill 584 only supports interpreters who happen to do contract-based, on-site work exclusively. The bill actively impedes all other medical interpreters.

As such, bill 584 fails to fulfill its purpose, and merits the opposition of all those who fight for health equity, language access, and better working conditions for all medical interpreters in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Nguyen