

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 15, 2023

Dear Chair and Co-Chair, and the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services Members,

As a private Deaf Community Member and US Taxpayer Citizen, I am here to represent myself as a Deaf Oregonian who fully support Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations, including Deaf-Blind persons who live in this fine, beloved State of Oregon in the needs of support and essential services provided by Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program (ODHHS) under the Department of Human Services (DHS).

I wanted to share my comments on what I have heard from the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Members in our Community. To dismay for many of the Members in the Community, they inform me that DHS has very limited critical fundings for such operations that the Members receive adequately, as well as providing essential services, including the awarding contractual services and expanding staff personnel positions (i.e., domestic violence, crisis interventions, advocacy, peer support counseling, and information & referrals). They have explained that without ODHHS' support, they would have gotten into the "cracks" and unable to obtain necessary support services, such as accommodations mandated by Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the access to obtaining additional protections and interventions provided by state agencies and elsewhere.

To my understanding is that DHS and ODHHS may have requested for a substantial allocation which is capped to \$500,000 that would have covered all operations' needs and support services in which would have provided adequate support (and essential) services.

Please reconsider the request for its funding, and **please, please** listen to the Members in our Community that the fund is truly, sorely needed!

Feel free to contact me to steven.social58@gmail.com if you have any questions or wish to contact with some of our Members in our Community and find out how we can help and make a **HUGE** difference for them!

Truly Yours,

Steven M Brown, MPA, MA, LMHC, NCC, LPC
Social[58], LLC
1819 SW 5th Avenue #143
Portland, Oregon 97201
(253) 948-3495