

February 28, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Rules

From: Paige Reohr, M.S., Mangata Wellness, Salem, OR

RE: Support SB 612 and SB 911

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

My name is Paige Reohr and I represent Mangata Wellness. I am a Behavioral Health Consultant predoctoral intern, four months away from completing my PhD in clinical psychology. I currently work with Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC), serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, in addition to lower socioeconomic communities throughout Central Washington and Oregon. I am also a Qualified Mental Health Professional with Mangata Wellness, based in Salem, OR. I write this testimony on behalf of Mangata Wellness's integrated mental and holistic health team with additional support from Julia Romanelli, Clinic Director of the Salud Medical Center in Woodburn, OR, and Phillip Hawley, PsyD, Clinical Director of Primary Care Behavioral Health through YVFWC.

According to anthropological estimates, there are 35,000 individuals in Oregon who speak Mesoamerican Indigenous languages. As a provider at a Federally Qualified Health Center, dedicated to serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Marion County, I observe first hand the impact of language barriers for this community. As a clinic serving farmworkers and their families, each day we are faced with the barriers of being unable to adequately communicate with this entire patient population. At times, family members provide interpretation at no cost, which is an unfair and unethical burden which impacts the patients' ability to disclose the necessary information to receive quality lifesaving care.

Oregonians have the right to healthcare, and with that, we need to create infrastructure to ensure this care is provided in a linguistically appropriate and responsive manner. Insisting Indigenous interpreters a pathway for certification to (1) provide patients adequate medical care, and (2) allow interpreters to be adequately compensated for their work ensures that all Oregonians can realize their right to healthcare.

Dr. Phillip Hawley and I presented this issue to the Migrant & Community Health Forum for the Northwest Regional Primary Care Association on February 13, 2023. Now, this opportunity to provide written testimony is timely. As such, I write in support of SB 612 to establish a process to demonstrate language proficiency of Mesoamerican Indigenous languages and a pathway to credentialing, and SB 911 to establish a culturally-responsive commission for Indigenous peoples from South America, Central America, and Mexico.

As a behavioral healthcare provider and Oregonian, I urge your support of these bills.

Respectfully,

Paige Reohr

