

Submitter: Kristin Quinlan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1578

Dear Senate Health Care Committee,

I am the owner and CEO of a language services company headquartered here in Portland. Our company provides remote interpreting services (over the phone and video) to clients all across the country. We interpret over 230 languages 24x7x365 and the majority of the work we do is interpreting in the hospital and healthcare industry.

I am writing to you asking for you to oppose SB 1578, the bill would direct the OHA to establish and maintain an online interpreter scheduling portal. While the intent behind this bill is positive, the realities of execution are deeply concerning

This proposed system would manage appointments for on-site interpreting encounters. It cannot manage on demand remote interpreting. Remote interpreters are located all across the country and simply will not go through state specific certification to provide their services. They will simply choose not to service healthcare clients in the State of Oregon. This bill in its current form does not delineate on-site vs. remote. While onsite interpretation is an essential and critical modality of interpretation, it only represents a small fraction of the encounters that take place throughout the state.

Take a look at the numbers:

- Approximately 3 million interpreting encounters in over 150 languages took place in Oregon in 2023.
- Greater than 65% of these encounters were remote.
- The number of languages represented in the current OHA registry is a fraction of the languages served by remote interpreting. This bill fails to recognize the vast and diverse demand on language access in the state of Oregon.

It does not make sense to have a system that only covers a minor percentage of interpreting encounters performed here in Oregon.

Further, the State would be taking on the federal liability for providing language access to our LEP population. What happens when an interpreter isn't available and the LEP patient is not able to communicate? Is the State of Oregon willing to assume the responsibility?

For the State of Oregon to build or buy a scheduling platform and hire a non-profit to

manage it is a significant fiscal liability that only covers a minority percentage of interpreting encounters.

Taking all this in to consideration, I urge you to oppose SB 1578.

Kind Regards,

Kristin Quinlan

Kristin@certifiedlanguages.com