

Submitter: Anna Sanchez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1578

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

My name is Anna Sanchez, and I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1578, a crucial piece of legislation that addresses the vital issue of language access in healthcare. As a member of Unite Oregon, a community organization dedicated to promoting justice, equity, and inclusivity, I am proud to advocate for a bill that aligns with these principles.

I would like to share a personal experience that underscores the importance of such legislation. My parents were non-english speakers. As a result I had to interpret for my parents from 4 years of age and all my childhood. I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by individuals who are not proficient in the English language which lead to misunderstandings, misdiagnoses, and inadequate care, ultimately compromising health and well-being.

As an adult and a bilingual Latina woman, oftentimes, I was asked to stay outside my work hours to interpret for students and families. I was even pulled away from my daily work to interpret. I was asked to stay after hours and sacrificed time with my family. I was not paid more or acknowledged for my work.

I believe that supporting SB 1578 is not only a matter of policy but also a commitment to the well-being and equitable treatment of all, regardless of their linguistic background. By improving language access, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate system that truly meets the needs of our diverse communities. In conclusion, I urge the committee to pass SB 1578. Let's take a crucial step toward ensuring that language is not a barrier and that all individuals, regardless of their linguistic background, can access the care they deserve.

Thank you.
Anna Sanchez