



Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar Aguilar and I am a political coordinator at Oregon AFSCME. Our union represents over 39,000 workers across the state in both public and private sectors and we believe in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to share support for SB 731. This bill would require public employers to provide for a pay differential for sign language skills in the same manner that pay differentials are provided for other bilingual or multilingual skills. We believe that this is an important step forward in ensuring work places are rich in linguistic diversity in order to better serve recipients of services.

Approximately more than a half-million people throughout the US use ASL to communicate as their native language. ASL is the third most commonly used language in the United States, after English and Spanish. Workers that are skillful in various languages should be compensated more equitably based on their knowledge.

We want to thank Senator Gelser and Patterson for bringing this policy forward to ensure inclusion of the use of American Sign Language in worker compensation while performing assigned duties.