

March 7th, 2025

RE: Support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

Dear State Legislators:

My name is Christina Healy Collister, and I am a sign language interpreter and interpreter educator. I'm writing to ask for your support of SB950, which amends the licensure law for sign language interpreters in Oregon.

The Board overseeing the rule-making is composed of my esteemed colleagues who are all very experienced, thoughtful, and committed experts in our field. Nevertheless, I have seen them struggle to create effective rules under the statute as written. The law is good, but it is broken.

They have found it impossible to define the settings and required credentials for the specialty licenses in ways that add protection for consumers, rather than adding only confusion and cost without benefit. They have been unable to create a pathway for new interpreters entering the field. Overall, they have found that while the statute is very necessary, in its current form, it has created unintended barriers to the most underrepresented populations in our field, such as interpreters who are themselves Deaf, those working in rural settings, and those from socially marginalized populations. These impacts on interpreters directly impact the communities we serve.

The changes proposed by SB950 will enable the law to do what it originally intended, namely protect the access and well-being of Oregon's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Thank you for your time and all the work you do for our state. I hope you will do all you can to support the passage of SB 950. Thank you,

Christina Healy Collister, PhD
CI&CT, QMHI, Ed:K-12, OHCI
License #SLI-SUP-10251471