

Submitter: Vicki Darden
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB950
March 11, 2025

The Honorable Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 950, which will provide amendments to the current law regulating sign language interpreter licensing in Oregon. I submit this testimony as an interpreter, interpreter educator, and researcher in the field of interpreting. Since the original bill was passed in 2023, and put into effect in 2024, the Health Licensing Office (HLO) has struggled to implement the legislation. Senate Bill 950 will help to address some of the issues the HLO has encountered with the original bill, such as redundancies in specialty licenses/certification, a lack of clarity in the definitions and requirements for different licenses, and lack of an effective induction path for new professionals.

The goals of the original bill were commendable, but did not correspond with the reality and current state of the profession. Instead of accomplishing the goal of ensuring that the Deaf community is served by competent and qualified practitioners, the bill has actually caused the already too-small population of proficient interpreters to become even more limited as the HLO, the Board of Sign Language Interpreters, and the Rules Advisory Committee have endeavored to implement the legislation for over a year. Former students of mine have transitioned out of interpreting into other fields because of the uncertainty surrounding licensing. Agencies that provide interpreters and Deaf individuals, alike, report that it is more difficult than ever to schedule interpreters for necessary activities. This has a negative effect on Deaf and hearing entities when they are unable to conduct business, medical, administrative, educational, and other types of activities in a timely way.

I strongly support passage of SB 950. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Vicki Darden, Ph.D.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Certificates of Interpreting and Transliteration

RID Certification Maintenance Program Administrator

National Association of the Deaf, Level IV Interpreter Certification

Certified Oregon Health Care Interpreter

M.A., Interpreting Studies

Ph.D., Education