

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 950
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE
MARCH 13, 2025**

**PRESENTED BY: KIMBERLY MCCULLOUGH,
SENIOR COUNSEL FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

SB 950 improves the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters' licensing requirements for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters that were created by HB 2696 (2023). We recognize and support the proponents' goal of ensuring that Oregonians are receiving high-quality interpretation services from credentialed interpreters who are trained to meet community needs in several settings. Excellence in interpretation serves Oregon's Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, as well as our state.

Oregon's policy is to "secure the constitutional rights and other rights of persons who are unable to readily understand or communicate in the English language because of a non-English-speaking cultural background or a disability, and who as a result cannot be fully protected in administrative and court proceedings unless qualified interpreters are available to provide assistance." ORS 45.273. By statute, the State Court Administrator must establish "a program for the certification of court interpreters" as well as "minimum competency requirements for court interpreters." ORS 45.291.

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) offers this unique program to meet the dynamic needs of Oregon's state courts and the diverse individuals we serve. Competence in interpretation, paired with flexibility to engage in services, is tremendously important to allow courts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, other federal and state statutes, and constitutional requirements.

We appreciate the proponents' awareness of OJD's interpreting services, and our mutual recognition that both OJD's certification program and the Board's licensure program are critical to meeting community needs and can work side-by-side to ensure excellent ASL interpretation is available in Oregon.