

Submitter: Christine Troy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2976

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Troy and I reside in Portland, Oregon. I strongly support HB 2976.

All Oregonians deserve to be understood and have others understand them. But that is not the reality for the 50,000+ Oregonians who speak an Indigenous language from present-day Mexico, Central, or South America.

With limited exceptions, credentials are required by some state entities to provide interpretation services. But, in order to obtain a credential, an interpreter must demonstrate they are qualified. The best way to demonstrate qualifications is by passing a formal language proficiency exam. These exams don't currently exist for many Indigenous languages from these regions, which hinders the ability of interpreters to provide their services in a variety of settings.

HB 2976 would allocate funding to develop language proficiency evaluations, recruit and retain a qualified workforce, and coordinate appointments across many different entities, helping remove significant barriers for individuals needing interpretation services in some of life's most critical moments.

I have personally experienced being sick and going to the hospital while living in a country where I do not understand the predominant language. Going to the emergency department when ill is scary when you can understand the language and even scarier when you are not sure what is being said to you. Lack of interpretation services hinder the ability to get an accurate patient medical history and communicate instructions between medical staff and the patient which can negatively impact the patient's health outcomes. HB 2976 will take critical steps to ensure that 50,000+ of my neighbors do not have that experience here in Oregon.

No Oregonian should be faced with language access barriers in emergency rooms, nor if they need to seek legal assistance after becoming a victim of crime. HB 2976 will help close these barriers and we urge your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Christine Troy