

Submitter: Robert Troyer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2976

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

I am writing to you today in support of HB 2976 to reduce barriers to interpretation for indigenous language speakers.

I am a professor of Linguistics at Western Oregon University, and I am a proud Oregonian in part because of our official language policy of "English Plus," which emphasizes the importance of individuals' home languages along with the de facto majority language, English. HB 2976 is more than a concrete improvement to indigenous speaker's access to healthcare--it is also a symbolic gesture on the national stage where the Trump White House has (unnecessarily) declared English as the sole official language of a multilingual nation, potentially cutting funding that provides alternative language access to people who need it. In Oregon we can send the message that the indigenous languages pushed nearly to extinction by colonization are important resources, that the remaining speakers of these languages are valued, and that we believe in the universal human right of people to nurture their home language while learning English for wider communication and community involvement.

I strongly urge you to support HB 2976.

Sincerely,  
Robert Troyer  
Monmouth, OR