



House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
**RE: Support HB 2976, Indigenous Language Justice**

March 18, 2025

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

My name is Isabela and I am the Policy and Communications Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We 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.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal, Policy and Communications Director