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House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

SB 731 - Requires public employer employment policies to provide for a pay differential for sign language skills in the same manner that pay differentials are provided for other bilingual or multilingual skills.

Hello chair Grayber, vice chair Elmer, vice chair Muñoz and members of the committee. My name is Adam Logan, I identify as hard of hearing (HH). In my most recent position I worked as a Hard of Hearing (HH) advocate with Bridges Oregon, a culturally and linguistically appropriate non-profit organization that works with the deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind and with additional disabilities. I have also worked as a Personal Support Worker, Home Care Worker, and as a Life Coach in the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), and occasionally hearing people. I am the former secretary for the Oregon Association of the Deaf as well. I am personally and professionally invested in the welfare of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

I am here in support of SB 731. The need for sign language access is far greater than the supply, and there is a shortage in qualified ASL interpreters. Passing this bill would put ASL users on the same level playing field as users of other languages who enjoy differential pay for proficiency in languages other than English. There are many situations where deaf and hard of hearing people do not have the privilege of requesting a sign language interpreter. This bill if implemented well, has the potential to incentivize companies to hire employees proficient in ASL. My hope is that some of these hires would be deaf or hard of hearing, who face struggles to obtain and keep decent jobs. It always makes my day when I bump into people who communicate with me fluently in sign language.

I humbly request you to vote aye in support of passing SB 731.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, I avail myself at your convenience.

Respectfully, Adam Logan

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