

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St NE

Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill 950

Dear Representatives:

My name is Sarah Young and I am currently licensed as a Medical and Supervisory Interpreter under HLO. I am a proud SODA (Sibling of a Deaf Adult) and have several Deaf family members who have gone through our education systems with underqualified interpreters and licensure had the potential to change this for the better.

I'm writing about my concerns for SB950 and I am disappointed to see that SB 950 as written does not strengthen the rights for students to have access to more qualified interpreters. Oregon's students deserve to have access to highly qualified language-proficient interpreters. The original bill had the potential to require more certified interpreters, (instead of the EIPA 3.5 currently required) in K-12 settings with a reasonable timeline to gain certifications and qualifications.

Educational interpreters serve a monumental role in providing language exposure and expertise that most students do not receive at home, as over 90 percent of Deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing parents who do not know sign language. It has been estimated that around 70% percent of Deaf children suffer from lack of sufficient language access and this can lead to **Language Deprivation Syndrome (LDS)**, a devastating and preventable constellation of symptoms that include struggles with the concepts of time, cause-and-effect, difficulty learning, struggles with emotional regulation, and severe behavioral issues. These are very serious consequences of not accessing language at an early age and not having appropriate language models and qualified interpreters at school.

These students need the support of the law to require interpreters with language competency and fluency. These students deserve highly qualified interpreters. Many professionals argue that Oregon's required EIPA score of 3.5 is insufficient and should not be accepted in K-12 settings. National organizations have agreed educational interpreters should be qualified at a 4.0 or hold a National certification because an interpreter who holds EIPA 3.5 will produce interpretations that contain

significant errors that lead to student misunderstanding. I would hope that the goal of licensure here in Oregon would be to strengthen requirements and provide better access and language models for our students.

Additionally, like the original bill, this bill does not support Deaf interpreters working in our profession. There are many barriers for these professionals and licensure has the potential to support their work in this field. We need a pathway for Deaf interpreters that recognizes the need for their unique skill sets, supports them as professionals and acknowledges the value of their lived experiences. These professionals deserve to be recognized under licensure.

While there are many pieces of SB 950 I do support, I strongly believe that it lacks any meaningful support of Oregon's students who use ASL interpreters. I am saddened to see the opportunity to strengthen requirements for educational interpreters weakened and to think that families today will still be facing some of the same struggles my family faced 40 years ago. I am disappointed that as written this bill does not recognize the importance of the hard work Deaf interpreters are doing in this community.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to oppose the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Amendment Bill (SB 950) to improve our ability to protect and serve the rights of Oregon's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Respectfully,

Sarah Young

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RID Nationally Certified ASL/English Interpreter

EIPA Qualified Interpreter for the state of Oregon

Oregon Licensed Medical and Supervisory Interpreter

Qualified Mental Health Interpreter (QMHI)

Oregon Certified Healthcare Interpreter (OCHI)

HIPAA Certified

CoreCHI™

