



May 6, 2025

Chair Sen. Deb Patterson, Vice-Chair Sen. Cedric Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jack Ludwig, and I am the President of the Oregon Association of the Deaf and the former Chair of the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters. I'm here today to express strong support for SB950.

As a Deaf individual, I rely on qualified sign language interpreters to access information and fully participate in civic life. The Oregon Association of the Deaf has long supported efforts to strengthen our interpreter system. We were pleased to see HB2696 pass last session, but it left significant authority with the Health Licensing Office (HLO)—an agency that has repeatedly resisted community input and change.

During my tenure as Chair of the Board, our ability to serve the community was hindered by HLO's lack of inclusion, transparency, accountability, and refusal to adapt—particularly around interpreter fee structures. Their position was out of alignment with national benchmarks and ignored the needs of Oregon's Deaf and interpreter ecosystems. This rigid stance exacerbated the interpreter shortage and ultimately led to my resignation from the board. Last December 2024, the OAD issued a vote of no confidence—not in the Board of Sign Language Interpreters, but specifically in HLO's administrative handling of interpreter-related matters.

SB950 corrects this imbalance by transitioning key authorities from HLO to the Board of Sign Language Interpreters—placing decision-making in the hands of professionals and individuals who are truly engaged and informed. This shift will support stronger licensing oversight and help prevent unlicensed or unqualified individuals from providing interpreting services, which continues to put Deaf community in Oregon at risk and undermines the integrity of our communication access.

This bill paves the way for better responsiveness, accountability, and progress. I urge your support for SB950. Thank you for considering this testimony. I am available to answer any questions or provide additional information to support your deliberations on SB 950.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Ludwig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jack Z. Ludwig, MS
President