

Feb 2, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

It is very much a life stake for Deaf Oregonians. **Senate Bill 449** seeks to create a permanent Office for Deaf, Deaf Blind, and Hard of Hearing Services. Without the requirement of social services be provided for those fellows around the great state of Oregon, it will make a difference and give them a new lease on their lives. Back in July 2010, I gave a presentation for the City of Portland Office of Human Relations. The media image of the Deaf has never been depicted through images of Deaf people in Oregon. Today, there is lack of social services in the state of Oregon and in the school districts.

Throughout the state, none of Deaf, Deaf Blind, and Hard of Hearing are taught to empower themselves. The supply and demand of social services refers to how many of services are available for Deaf, Deaf Blind, and Hard of Hearing people; Demand means how many of them wish to have services. It is now obvious that supply and demand traces the educational bankruptcy of all Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing people and the quality bankruptcy of all the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Oregon. There is a little common ground merging between the "discrimination" and "no discrimination" position for those people because there is little agreement about what constitutes a linguistic bias in the social justice system. For example, it is not okay for those people to be not clear in writing, but it is okay (and understandable) for hearing people to be not clear in using ASL.

The biggest concern is counseling the Deaf for alcoholics and substance abuse. With this lack of social services, there are great many Deaf people--36% of the Deaf population compared to 13% of general population in the United States--who are vulnerable to alcohol abuse. Dr. Betty G. Miller, a certified, Deaf alcoholism counselor says: "*Loneliness, depression, social alienation, a low self-esteem---all these elements are heightened with a deaf person.*" There are only four cities that offer Alcohol Anonymous 12 Step Meetings for the Deaf. However, Deaf alcoholics would need to request for an available interpreter who is well-honed in facilitating communication through these 12 step meetings, Dr. Frank Lala, Jr; writes in his book, **Counseling the Deaf Substance Abuser**: "Communicating this concept throughout the deaf community might relieve the strong stigma and sense of shame related to identifying as in need of help." As well as Dr. Barbara Kannapell writes: "*The trust-mistrust phenomenon among deaf people is evident, and in an instance a perceived difference in language power between the deaf person and the service professional is involved.*"

Many counselors are not deaf and therefore inept in using ASL. Dr. Steven K. Chough says: "*If a counselor is to be perceived as wise and trustworthy, he/she should not be a dupe, any more than he/she should be paternalistic.*"

It is presented as an instructive tool to inform the state of Oregon on this important issue. It can be useful to clarify how far the Deaf, Deaf Bind and Hard of Hearing people have come and what has to be done about ASL and social services in education, employment and many others. Please support **Senate Bill 449**. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jason "JT" Tozier