



March 9, 2015

Senator Sara Gelsler, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care and Early Childhood
Oregon State Legislature
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Salem, OR 97301

Administration
681 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
503.588.5828
503.588.5852 FAX

Connection Program
503.588.5846
503.588.5843 TTY

HOTLINE
503.581.5535
503.588.5833 TTY
503.391.5291 FAX
1.800.560.5535

HOAP
(Homeless Outreach
& Advocacy Project)
503.588.5827
503.315.0714 FAX

HOST
Youth & Family Program
503.588.5825
503.361.0383 FAX

West Salem Clinic
Medical
503.378.7526
503.585.4278 FAX
Mental Health
503.588.5816
503.588.5803 FAX
Dental
503.315.0712
503.325.0721 FAX

Total Health
Community Clinic
Medical
503.606.3288
503.606.3287 FAX

RE: **Senate Bill 449**

Dear Senator Sara Gelsler,

My name is Lior Azen and I am a licensed therapist at Northwest Human Services. I am writing to urge you and your Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood to support SB 449 that is introduced by Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson. For years Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians have been unable to receive direct communication access and supporting services from state agencies and businesses because those agencies do not provide the necessary cultural and linguistic competency services, nor can existing budgets of governmental programs begin to accommodate those services. Oregonians with hearing loss encounter daily discrimination, oppression, and barriers to employment and recreation.

As a mental health counselor for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at NWHS, I have clients who are having a difficult time gaining access for their needs and services. I believe that the establishment of a permanent Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians will begin to remove those barriers.

The Office will provide information, referral, advocacy, case management, education, and training, and will serve as the state authority on Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing citizens. It will address the entire range of needs of its clients. It will begin to provide the functional equivalency for employment, recreation, and life that these citizens deserve.

Please support Senate Bill 449.

Sincerely,

Lior Azen, CRC, LPC
Mental Health Counselor/Case Manager

cc: Oregon Association of the Deaf, Inc.
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