



Oregon Communication Access Project

Enriching the World for Those with Hearing Loss

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The Hon. Sara Gelser,
Chairwoman before the Senate Committee on Health Care and Early Childhood
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

March 23, 2015

Dear Senator Gelser,

I am writing you to give you our support of Senate Bill 449. As you know, SB 449 encourages the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide mandated services for hard of hearing, deaf and deaf-blind Oregonians. For the hard of hearing, understanding speech and lyrics without effective accommodations such as captions and assistive listening systems, comprehension ranges from difficult to impossible. At the same time, very few people who are hard of hearing know sign language so providing interpreters is not an effective accommodation for hard of hearing people.

Currently, ORS 410.740 does not require the DHS to provide these services, even if it is advised by the Oregon Disability Commission. We want DHS to be required to provide them.

Because people who are hard of hearing have difficulty understanding speech and lyrics they may:

- Leave the workforce prematurely with lost productivity and income and may
- not be able to fully participate in cultural, civic and entertainment events thus depriving society of their involvement and them in the richness of social life.

In spite of these individual and societal implications, few events offer assistive listening or captions as accommodations. With passage of SB 449 we hope to have the backing of the DHS to achieve those accommodations.

Please support SB 449 as it makes its way through the legislative process!

Sincerely,

Clark O. Anderson, President
Oregon Communication Access Project

CC: Oregon Association of the Deaf (OAD)