

In Support of HB 794

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser and members of Ways and Means,

My two hard of hearing sons transferred from Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) to Frederick County Public School (FCPS) system because MSD education program is not up to standard due to being a separate entity from Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and didn't meet my sons' educational needs. My sons currently take honors classes at FCPS.

How can interpreters who are not certified be expected to translate accurately? How are substitute uncertified interpreters expected providing communication consistency

MSDE staff specializing in DHH failed to ensure that MSDE, MSD and school districts comply with **2016 Maryland Education law § 8-3A-03. "duties of parties to meet educational needs of deaf"**

And also offer options such as speech-to-text service or interpreter through computer/technology in case the classroom interpreters miss important information including terminologies used.

If you are required to pass exam and driving tests in order to be licensed to drive a vehicle then DHH students/children should have certified interpreters to be qualified to interpret inside and outside of classrooms.

Thank you, and I request a **favorable report on HB794.**
Sarah Ann Rose

HB 794 Support

21 February 2020

Dear Chairwoman and Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

As a nationally certified, Deaf-Parented Interpreter and an employer of sign language interpreters providing services throughout the state of Maryland in various educational settings, **I am in support of HB0794.**

Maryland has the duty/responsibility to protect our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, and even more so for children from fraudulent and unqualified interpreters. Deaf and Hard of Hearing students simply deserve access to our education through proficient and qualified interpreters, those that possess a nationally recognized certification or have passed the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment with a minimum score of 3.7.

Thank you.

Marie E. Alford, M.L.S., NIC

Dear Legislators,

I support HB 0794, because Deaf students who are in a mainstream school need qualified professional interpreters--be they sign language, signed English, or oral—so that the Deaf student can fully be exposed to the education being taught.

Thank you,

Debra Radcliffe-Borsch

Debra Radcliffe-Borsch

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Interpreter Coordinator/DSS Counselor

Howard Community College

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Good Afternoon Chairwoman Kaiser and Delegates in Ways and Means,

I wanted to write to you to inform that I am in support of the above bill, HB 794, Educational Interpreters. I had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Morales on SB 677, Hearing Aid Loan and Communication Mode Resources Loan Bank last year. Dr. Morales has once again put forth a sound and fair bill with HB 794.

My son has severe to profound hearing loss and wears cochlear implants. Currently, he is mainstreamed in his second grade classroom and receives minimal interventions. I was an educator for four years in two different states and worked with kids who had IEPs. As a former educator, I understand the importance of certification but I also understand how many educators don't receive a perfect score on certification tests and are still effective in the classroom. After reading Mr. Brick's recommendations to amend HB 794, I do not agree with his opinions mostly because insisting on a minimum score of 4.0 would limit many talented and motivated people from entering the field. The original minimum of 3.7 is sufficient in ensuring that talented interpreters are in the classrooms. Also, Mr. Brick's extremely shortened timeframe for interpreters to receive their certification is unfair as it creates much undo stress upon those trying to obtain the required credentials. Mr. Brick also does not allow for parent choice of communication mode for their children which he also expresses in his recommendations. We encountered this same issue with him last year during our work on SB 677. Mr. Brick objected to our inclusion of all communication modes for families and only wanted us to focus on ASL. In reality, Deaf and Hard of Hearing children rely on many different communication modes, and as a parent of a deaf child, I wish more professionals in this field would recognize that. Dr. Morales' bill does recognize the need for services that fit all communication modes, and all families' needs. Her bill acknowledges that quality interpreters are needed in the classroom without placing undo or unnecessary stress upon them to receive the tools required for them to perform their jobs successfully.

Thank you,

Eleanor P Jones

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Eleanor Parnelle Jones
Social Media/Marketing Rep
Maryland AG Bell

Support HB794

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser and Members of the Committee,

All the years, I was raised in several different mainstreamed schools with deaf programs. My mother used to say that signing language was not very useful for school. As a former oral student, I had a variety of ASL interpreters and sub-interpreters who mostly did not have certifications. Some of the interpreters did not show up in my classes showed a lot about their loyal commitments. Some of them broke some ethical issues such as looking/texting their cell phones during the class hours. Some of them looked at their cloth shopping at computer when I took a Computer Science class. Based on their duties, I thought that my mother was right that sign language was not helpful or useful which lead me to focus on my oral practical skills for my academic achievements. However, one certified interpreter, a child of deaf adults, proved that her translation/interpreting skills in ASL are very excellent that opens my understanding in deaf world or a world of sign language(s). After this impact, I decided to pursue Deaf Studies and Sign Language/Deaf Education at universities. Now, I am a signed language activist.

Please support HB 794.

Sincerely,
Yeh Kim

Deaf Interpreter: ASL, International Sign

MA in Sign Language Education '20 & Linguistics '21

MS in Professional Studies in Deaf Education '18

BS in Management Information Systems '17