

House Bill 535 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act
sponsored by Delegate Acevero

Madam Chairperson and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Sarah Yates. I am a hearing interpreter. I live in Maryland. I am writing this testimony to ask you to support **HB535 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Act of 2021** sponsored by Delegate Acevero.

This bill would require licensure for sign language interpreters working in the state of Maryland and help to ensure that members of the Deaf community have access to qualified interpreters. When unqualified interpreters are allowed to work unchecked, the impact on the communities they serve can be a matter of life or death. This bill provides both a mechanism for licensing interpreters and a means for relief in the form of a grievance process.

It is important for this board to be impartial and not represent any one particular organization or be governed by any specific government entity. As a child of deaf parents and as a certified interpreter in Maryland for over 20 years, it is important that deaf people are protected by this legislation.

I ask that you support this bill and allow for an impartial board. I do not want a government entity to oversee and run this board. My goal is to see ODHH provide support, but not be in charge of it as I prefer impartiality. I have been an interpreter in Maryland for over 26 years and I have parents who are deaf, long time residents of Maryland who have seen too many unqualified interpreters. This bill will allow for protections that have long been needed.

As a constituent, I ask you to please support HB535.

Sincerely,

Sarah Yates sarahyterp@aol.com

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