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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Bill 370 – Education – Educational Interpreter – Certification Requirements

March 3, 2022

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

According to a report by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in 2019 there were 606 students in Maryland public schools with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with a deaf/hard of hearing designation code. This number does not include the 515 students enrolled in the Maryland School for the Deaf.

Despite this significant number of students, Maryland is one of a handful of states that does not have certification or licensing requirements for interpreters that are working with Deaf and hard of hearing students.

Senate Bill 370 will require the Maryland State Board of Education to adopt regulations, on or before July 1, 2023 for the certification of Educational Interpreters in public schools. The bill further requires that any Educational Interpreter employed by a public school must obtain certification by July 1, 2029.

We have worked diligently to ensure that a public education in Maryland is world class and will prepare our students for success in higher education and ultimately their careers. We need to ensure that commitment is being extended to all of our students including those who have a different means of communication.

Senate Bill 370 will help ensure that the interpreters working with Deaf and hard of hearing students have the proper training and qualifications for the job and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 370.