



Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony
SB0370 – Educational Interpreter – Certification Requirements
Thursday, March 3, 2022

President

Kirsten Poston

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) strongly believes in community engagement in the legislative process when it impacts the community. Our organization serves individuals from birth to senior citizens in the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities. According to state census data, there are approximately 1.2 million individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in the State.

Vice President

Tina Joyner

Secretary

Jacob Leffler

The Educational Interpreters provide Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students access to the language and removes communication barriers so they can thrive in schools. Those children are our future. By doing that, we need to ensure that students have qualified sign language interpreters interpreting in the classroom in all aspects of their educational journey.

Treasurer

Marie Campbell

Board Members

Vikki Porter

Toyin Fasakin

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Blaise Delahoussaye

Angela Rogers

Peter Un

Unfortunately, MDAD cannot support this bill because the community was not engaged in the process of developing the bill. MDAD has serious concerns about the language in the bill. We are concerned that the language in the bill will allow people who are not familiar with education for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children to make a decision for their access to information or communication. Having unqualified interpreters will be detrimental to their educational journey. It is important that the community is involved in the process with this bill to ensure that Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children have qualified interpreters in their education. Children are our future, and we have to advocate for the best interests of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children.

We are respectfully asking the legislature to send this bill back to the authors and encourage the authors to work with MDAD and the community as well on writing the bill.

Thank you,

MDAD Board of Directors