

February 20, 2020

Delegate Lily Qi
Montgomery County, District 15
6 Bladen St., Room 223
Annapolis, MD 21403

Dear Delegate Qi and Team,

Greetings! I am a resident of Prince George's County, a professor of American Sign Language (ASL) at Anne Arundel Community College, and the Chair of the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH) which advises and supports the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH).

As a Deaf person, I wholly support the need for state regulations on educational interpreters in primary and secondary education. Deaf children are often provided, if any, sign language interpreters who are not qualified or certified to work in educational settings. It is unfortunate the State of Maryland does not have any regulations in place that ensures Deaf students are receiving ASL interpreters.

Therefore, I offer a condition support of HB 794 – Educational Interpreter bill if as amended as follows:

1. Page 4, Line 20: **Pass ~~One~~ the EIPA ASL Performance Test with a Minimum Score of ~~3.7~~ 4.0.**
 - a. The ASL performance test must be emphasized as there are other forms of tests available. This emphasis ensures that educational interpreters must not only pass the written exam but the performance exam as well.
2. Page 4, Lines 24-32: **A Minimum of 40 20 Hours Annually of Professional Development as Outlined by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.**
 - a. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) expects certification holders to complete 80 hours of professional development within a 4-year cycle. This equates to 20 hours of annual professional development.
3. The bill focuses on interpreters currently working in educational settings. Provisions are outlined what current interpreters need to do to remain employed. Hired interpreters after the effective date should already be certified, as outlined in the bill and suggested above, along with a set minimum years of interpreting experience.
4. The bill mentions Cued Speech and oral interpreters but no provisions are outlined for these interpreters.
 - a. There are different types of interpreters that are utilized by Deaf and hard of hearing children that also include, but not limited to, trilingual and tactile interpreters. There needs to be in place a regulatory agency and ODHH would be the appropriate office as they have staffing who are experienced with the field of sign language interpreting.

I look forward to the passage of the educational interpreter bill because it is much needed!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Lawrence Gray, Ed.D.