

21 February 2020
HB 794, Support

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kaiser,

Thank you your time to hear about the educational struggles of Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons pursuing primary and secondary education.

My name is Ricky Rose. I'm originally from New England where I attended the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. I had full, direct access to instruction because my teachers all signed, which was critical for my education. I went on to earn by Bachelors of Science from Utah State University and my Masters of Arts in Deaf Studies from Gallaudet University. I have been an interpreter education for over 25 years. I currently work for Gallaudet University as a member of the ASLPI Department, where I am responsible for evaluating the ASL fluency of those wishing to pursue a career working with the Deaf Community.

As a Deaf adult I have experienced the struggles of trying to navigate everyday experiences with sub-par interpreters. I cannot imagine having to go through that challenge as a child trying to get an education. I have seen people arguing about "passing test scores" and "minimal requirements" (EIPA 3.5 or 5) for Educational Interpreters. I'm disgusted. The bottom line is that Deaf children in mainstream settings deserve as close to the full, 100% access that I had growing up. Anything less is unacceptable, unequal and unfair. We require our teachers, or any professional stakeholder, to be certified and we should expect the same from Educational Interpreters.

Thank you for your time. I urge a favorable report on HB 794.

Ricky Rose