



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Written Support

House Ways and Means Committee

House Bill 794 – Education – Educational Interpreters – Certification Requirements

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of *House Bill 794 – Education - Educational Interpreters - Certification Requirements*. This legislation would create new requirements for educational interpreters who work in Maryland public schools.

House Bill 794 would create certification standards for educational interpreters to help protect the integrity of the educational experience for students who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. All K-12 students deserve the opportunity to be educated by professionals with specialized academic and professional training and credentials. Unlike the majority of other states, Maryland does not currently have certification standards for educational interpreters. For many students, interpreters are a primary source of information both inside and outside of the classroom.

One of our member institutions, McDaniel College, is dedicated to preparing Deaf Education professionals through both undergraduate and graduate program offerings. McDaniel has offered a renowned Master of Science in Deaf Education program for several decades, preparing teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels. Additionally, McDaniel offers an undergraduate minor in American Sign Language (ASL) Studies and is applying for State approval to offer an ASL major. As referenced in McDaniel's testimony, the College is committed to supporting the implementation of HB 794 through expanding its Deaf Education program offerings.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for House Bill 794.