

From: Randy Murbach [<mailto:randymurbach@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 5:35 PM

To: Pendergrass, Shane Delegate <Shane.Pendergrass@house.state.md.us>; Hill, Terri Delegate <Terri.Hill@house.state.md.us>

Cc: Randy Murbach <randymurbach@gmail.com>

Subject: ****AMENDMENT**** Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Act (HB535)

Dear Delegate Pendergrass and Delegate Hill,

My name is Randy Murbach and I live in Ellicott City, MD 21042 and I am one of the Commissioners with the Howard County Commission on Disabilities (<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/CDI>).

I want to discuss with you about HB535 that is with the Health and Government Operations Committee (2/24/2021 @ 1:30pm) and I support the bill with amendments.

Amendment #1:

I urge you to make an amendment to have the Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GODHH) to have sole responsibility and management of the Maryland Interpreter Licensure Program. I do not want it to be parked in the Department of Labor because it causes some confusion with two agencies involved. According to the research on the Maryland oneStop website, (<https://onestop.md.gov/>) there are other agencies who distribute or issue licenses that fit with their Subject Matter Expert. For example, Department of Education issues Educator Certification, Department of Agriculture issues Livestock Dealer License and Veterinary License. The Department of Labor issues licenses to barbers, cosmetologists, mechanist, and more. Interpreters do not fit in that category that the Department of Labor issues licenses to. After looking at the website, it makes sense that ODHH has an authority to issue or distribute licenses to the interpreter. GODHH is the Subject Matter Expert with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community and our issues.

Amendment #2:

I have some recommendations regarding the Board and maybe you can make an amendment. I recommend that the overview of the recommended Board composition needs further consideration on that bill. It would be ideal to have eight Board Members:

1. Three proficient and licensed hearing Sign Language Interpreters
2. Two Deaf/Hard-Of-Hearing Consumers
3. One DeafBlind Consumer
4. One Certified Deaf Interpreter (also does tactile interpreting work.)
5. One Sign Language Interpreter from Interpreter Training Program
6. Ex Officio should be the Director of GODHH or the former Director of GODHH, and they do not have voting rights. The GODHH Director serves as

an Advisor/Consultant.

That way a full aspect and standpoint from all communities that work with an interpreter is represented on the board.

Amendment #3:

Regarding the Interpreting from/to oral language and American Sign Language. They do not apply to Deaf Interpreters. We suggest that we add language in the bill regarding the Certified Deaf Interpreters. There is a certification for Deaf Interpreters to take and pass, so they are qualified to interpret.

Amendment #4:

Regarding Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), Setting is exempt from getting the sign language licensure. We strongly recommend that this should be required for interpreters to obtain licensure. VRI Interpreters often work in the hospital, and it is critical for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind to have qualified interpreters.

I hope you will support the bill with amendments.

Thank you,

Randy Murbach
Ellicott City, MD 21042