

To Honorable Committee Chair and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

Hi, my name is Peggy Faulkner. I am a student at a University. I have had my struggles with unqualified interpreters at school and an internship. It affected both my education and my internship with the police department. It affected my supervisors and the administrators. In one situation, the interpreting agency hired a non-certified interpreter who had migrated from Japan. She was a novice interpreter and had recently learned ASL. We were shocked and appalled that the coordinator sent her to the police department without knowledge of American law. She spelled important vocabulary wrong including the term "probable cause." Because she was unqualified and still learning, her interpretation caused me to write the wrong legal vocabulary for my studies. Fortunately, the qualified team interpreter corrected her and decided to take over for the whole time. It was not fair for my qualified interpreter who interpreted for hours because of the team's incompetence. Situations like this are not uncommon. Thank goodness, my co-workers have caught some interpretation errors before we investigated cases. These errors could have affected those victims due to miscommunication and disfluency. A lot of unqualified interpreters are not trained in policy and ethics. My professors have been frustrated and worried that I could fail in classes. In another case, an agency hired a novice and non-certified interpreter for a college class of mine. She repeatedly asked my professor to repeat or ask her team many times for clarification. I politely asked the coordinator to replace this interpreter, but was told that she had Deaf family, so was qualified. I gave her several chances, but missed important class information each time. The coordinator wouldn't grant my request and I had no other recourse via the law. It got to a point where, in a law class I was taking, the interpreter was so unqualified and unethical and interrupted the class so often, that the professor complained and I eventually had to ask the interpreter to simply not to come back to class after asking her to recuse herself multiple times. I was willing to miss entire classes worth of information rather than get incorrect, incomplete interpretations that gave the illusion of access. We need a law to require qualified, licensed interpreters. This will help to protect my rights and give me a path to justice if anything bad happens to me and others because of an unqualified interpreter. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.