

House Bill 535 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act
sponsored by Delegate Acevero

Madam Chairperson and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Brian Greenwald. I am Deaf and live in Maryland. I am writing this testimony to ask you to support **HB535 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Act of 2021** sponsored by Delegate Acevero.

This bill would require licensure for sign language interpreters working in the state of Maryland and help to ensure that members of the Deaf community have access to qualified interpreters. When unqualified interpreters are allowed to work unchecked, the impact on the communities they serve can be a matter of life or death. This bill provides both a mechanism for licensing interpreters and a means for relief in the form of a grievance process.

I have seen far too many unqualified interpreters at meetings in my children's public schools. Participating in teacher meetings and interacting with other parents is an exhausting chore due to ineffective interpreting. I have been to medical appointments only to learn that the interpreter is a student in an ITP (Interpreter Training Program). I have dismissed interpreters from appointments due to poor receptive and expressive skills, and quite simply, nowhere competent in American Sign Language. Please pass the Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Licensure bill to allow those who need interpreters unfettered access to information and, as citizens, to participate in all corners of our democracy.

As a constituent, I ask you to please support HB535.

Sincerely,

Brian Greenwald Annapolis, MD 21401