

**Testimony in Support with Amendments to House Bill 651  
Education—Educational Interpreter—Certification**

**House Ways and Means Committee  
February 5, 2021  
1:30 pm**

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Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association is in support, with amendments, of House Bill 651, legislation that would require the State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board to develop certain rules and regulations for the certification of educational interpreters.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA is dedicated to ensuring that all of our children receive a world class public education; one that prepares them for college, career and life. This is especially true for our most vulnerable students, including those who are differently abled. Our students who are deaf and hard of hearing deserve unfettered access to the content and skills essential for college and career readiness. Unfortunately, much like the case with our English language learners, our deaf and hard of hearing students communicate in a different language than their classroom teachers. As such, their ability to best meet their unique learning needs can be challenging. Classroom teachers, therefore, must rely on our educational interpreters (EIs) to assist in “translating” that which our hearing able students are receiving to our deaf and hard of hearing students. Without this support, our schools are unable to provide access to the Free Appropriate Public Education to which our differently abled deaf and hard of hearing students have a right to access. This is unacceptable.



MSEA believes that all of us have a role to play in providing our students with the services, supports and resources they need in order to be successful. This legislation will ensure that a significant player in the process is well equipped to execute their responsibility to ensure fair access to all of Maryland's students.

We are to understand that the bill sponsor intends to offer a number of amendments to this legislation. We support these amendments and thank the sponsor for her willingness to work with us to ensure that the final language in this bill is crafted such that it meets the desired outcomes for all involved.

**With the inclusion of said sponsor amendments, MSEA requests a Favorable Report on House Bill 651.**