

Dear Honorable Representatives:

I'm writing in reference to SB0464/HB0651 which will establish certification requirements for Maryland Sign Language Interpreters working in the K-12 education system.

I am the director for the CCBC Sign Language Interpreter Training Program. My program is one of only two programs in the state of Maryland that trains interpreters to work with the deaf. Deaf people need well-trained interpreters to provide them with accessibility per their rights outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our program provides students with an AAS in Interpreting (generalist), however for our graduates to obtain national certification they also need to complete a baccalaureate degree. Additional specialized training in Educational Interpreting is strongly recommended.

Maryland currently has no regulations which determine who can market themselves an interpreter. Sadly, Maryland deaf citizens often find themselves in situations where the interpreter that was hired for their appointment (doctor appointment, college class, job interview etc...) is not qualified and in some cases has never been trained and/or does not actually know American Sign Language (ASL). Many deaf children, who are mainstreamed in Maryland's K-12 system are being exposed to unqualified language models; stagnating their cognitive development and they have no voice.

The proposed bill will establish some minimum requirements for interpreters working with deaf children in education and this is very desirable.

The Community College of Baltimore County is working on creating some professional training for educational interpreters. We will also be having our spring cohort take the EIPA written and performance tests by way of an MSDE Perkins grant. We hope our research with our current students will shed some light into the readiness of recent Interpreter Training graduates to work in the K12 Education setting.

While the training and testing we are doing are good first steps there is still great need to train interpreters across Maryland to be better prepared to work with deaf students in an Educational Setting.

Additionally the CCBC testing centers at Catonsville and Dundalk campus are working on becoming approved sites to provide the EIPA written exam. The contract has not yet been approved.

If you have any questions or would like more information please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Rebecca F. Minor, Ph.D. | [INTR Program Coordinator – Associate Professor](#) | [The Community College of Baltimore County – Interpreter Preparation Program](#) | 443-840-4975 (W) | 443-341-5031 (VP) | 443-840-5134 (fax) | rminor3@ccbcmd.edu -