

February 20, 2023

The Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice-Chair Kelly
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 260 sponsored by Delegates Bagnall, Guyton, Healey, Hill, Howard, D. Jones, Kaufman, McCaskill, T. Morgan, Pruski, Simmons, Taveras, and Woods.

My name is Annaliesa Edwards and I am a relative of Deaf individuals who reside in Maryland. I am also living and studying in Maryland.

I am writing to ask you to support HB 0260 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Act of 2023 sponsored by Delegates Bagnall, Guyton, Healey, Hill, Howard, D. Jones, Kaufman, McCaskill, T. Morgan, Pruski, Simmons, Taveras, and Woods. 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 urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

I have first hand experience in observing and being privy to unqualified and unethical behavior on the part of the ASL interpreter provided to my father while under medical care at a hospital in the state of Maryland. I am currently studying at FCC to become an ASL/English interpreter to ensure that those I serve in the Deaf community have access to qualified and ethical interpreting services.

As a constituent in Maryland, I ask you to please support HB 0260.

Sincerely,

Annaliesa Edwards

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