

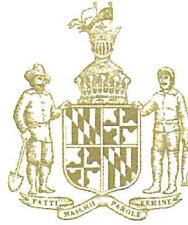
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MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair

Education, Business, and
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Bill 645 – State Board of Sign Language Interpreters – Membership and Licensing

February 26, 2026

Mister Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

During the 2023 legislative session, the legislature passed the Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act. This Act, among other things, established licensing requirements for sign language interpreters, established a State Board of Sign Language Interpreters, and set dates for regulations and requirements.

In creating a new regulatory process there are often issues that arise that need further discussion and legislative input. Senate Bill 645 will do a few things:

1. It will realign dates that have already passed and have not been met.
2. It will add members to the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters to allow for broader input and bring the operations of the Board more in line with other similar occupational licensure boards.
3. It adds reporting requirements and stakeholder input as the Board develops regulations related to specialty licensing.
4. With the sponsor technical amendment, it will allow the Board flexibility in setting qualifications for licensing as was intended in the original legislation.

Senate Bill 645 with sponsor amendments will strengthen the commitment to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community to ensure protections from unqualified or fraudulent interpreters, it will elevate the profession of sign language interpretation, and it will put the Office and the Board in the best position for successful implementation of this important licensing legislation.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 645.