

Michelle Morales, EdD
February 26, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Regarding **SB0645** (HB1192) - *State Board of Sign Language Interpreters - Membership and Licensing*

Dear members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I want to thank Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for this opportunity to present my written testimony regarding SB0645 (HB1192).

I want to thank all who were involved in the amendment of this State Board of Sign Language Interpreters law. Thank you for listening.

I **support** SB0645 (HB1192) with **amendments**.

page 2, line 3 (i) one shall be a member of the Maryland Association of the Deaf; and page 5; line 19 (II) THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF; (**note**: Maryland Association of the Deaf [MDAD] ***does not*** represent deaf Marylanders. MDAD claimed that they represent 1.2 million DHH people in MD, that is misinformation. As far as I know, they have not visited the DHH community on the eastern shore. They declined the invitation from western MD. MDAD is not inclusive of BIPOC DHH, DHH of different social economic status, different communication modalities, late deafness, etc.). Since this bill affects **ALL** Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people, here are my **amendments**; 1) remove Maryland Association of the Deaf from this bill and replace them with DDBHH individuals; **or** 2) contact the Director of the Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing for the current list of associations, agencies, groups, and organizations of the DDBHH and recruit DDBHH individuals; **or** 3) keep MDAD and include all the other associations, agencies, groups, and organizations of the DDBHH in alphabetical order. See examples below)

Some examples of agencies, associations, groups, and or organizations of DDBHH in Maryland:

- Anne Arundel Deaf Group
- Any Deaf ministries
- Any mental health groups for DDBHH
- Chesapeake Bay Association of the Deaf
- Deaf Grassroots Movement - Maryland
- Deafnet (western Maryland)
- Deaf Independent Living Association (eastern shore)
- Eastern Shore for the Deaf Social (inactive due to pandemic, contact DILA [see above])
- Hearing Loss Association of America
- Howard County Association of the Deaf
- Interstate Association of the Deaf
- Latino Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association of the Metro DC Area

- Maryland/DC Hands & Voices
- Maryland Association of the Deaf
- Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens
- Metropolitan Washington Association of Deaf-Blind
- National Black Deaf Advocate
- Silent Orioles Club
- Washington Society of the Jewish Deaf
- ...and more

page 2, line 14 OPERATES AND IMPLEMENTS DEAF SERVICES IN AN EDUCATIONAL,...
 (note: remove EDUCATIONAL. GODHH and SBSLI are not state education agencies. They do not have the knowledge and qualifications to properly oversee and support public K-12 personnel).

page 4, line 9 licensing requirements for sign language interpreting in all settings; (note: add “but not educational setting”. GODHH and SBSLI are not state education agencies. They do not have the knowledge and qualifications to properly oversee and support public K-12 personnel).

page 4, line 28 (8) any other specialist areas...(note: add “but not educational interpreter specialist area. GODHH and SBSLI are not state education agencies. They do not have the knowledge and qualifications to properly oversee and support public K-12 personnel).

page 5, lines 23, 24, 25, (VI) THE MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; (VII) THE MARYLAND STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION; (VIII) THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND (notes: remove MSDE, MSEA, and PSAM. These groups have no subject matter expert staff who are DDBHH. They do not have the knowledge and qualifications regarding language and communication needs of DHH K-12 students and the educational interpreter field. They have not been responsive to contacts by the community who are DDBHH). “Nihil de no is sine no is” means “nothing about us without us”.

Again, I **support SB0645** (HB1192) with **amendments**. **Do not pass without amendment**.

As the Moore/Miller Administration says, “leave no one behind”.

Thank you,

Respectfully,

Michelle Morales, EdD