



Testimony - HB 1192, State Board of Sign Language Interpreters - Membership and  
Licensing  
Favorable

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

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Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and  
Elections Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents more than 20,000 working people across Maryland and the District of Columbia, including sign language interpreters working in Montgomery County Public Schools as educational support professionals. These workers play a critical role in ensuring that Deaf and hard-of-hearing students can fully participate in the classroom and access the same educational opportunities as their peers.

House Bill 1192 makes several important improvements to Maryland's interpreter licensing framework. The bill expands the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters, ensuring that the board reflects a broader range of stakeholders including interpreters, deaf and deafblind community members, and professionals who work in settings such as education, legal services, and healthcare. This broader representation is critical for developing policies that reflect the real-world needs of the communities and workplaces where interpretation services are provided.

For the interpreters we represent in Montgomery County Public Schools, these decisions have direct consequences. Educational interpreters operate in complex environments that require not only linguistic fluency but also an understanding of classroom instruction, student development, and collaboration with educators and support staff. Ensuring that the Board has representation from individuals familiar with educational settings will help guarantee that licensing standards and future specialty areas are implemented in ways that support both professional interpreters and the students who depend on them.

HB 1192 also responsibly adjusts the timeline for establishing and meeting licensing requirements, providing additional time for the Board to develop thoughtful standards and for interpreters across the state to meet them.

This practical adjustment will help avoid unintended workforce disruptions while maintaining the goal of high professional standards.

For educational interpreters, stability in the workforce is essential. School systems across Maryland already face challenges recruiting and retaining qualified interpreters. Policies that are thoughtful, inclusive, and workable will help ensure that schools can continue to provide the services Deaf and hard-of-hearing students rely on every day.

SEIU Local 500 strongly believes that interpreters deserve a licensing framework that recognizes their professional expertise, values their work in educational settings, and includes their voices in decision-making.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1192.

Thank you for your time and consideration.