Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf

March 4, 2008

Honorable Senator Jonathan Harris, Co-Chair
Honorable Representative Peter Villano, Co-Chair
Human Services Committee Members

My name is James Pedersen of West Hartford. I testify today as President of the Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf (CCOSD). My testimony is in reference to Raised Bill No. 5797.

I support Raised Bill No. 5797, an act concerning the availability of qualified interpreter service. In 1997, there was a section of Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, a statute that addressed the legal issues of an individual's right to an interpreter and specific responsibility of all entities in the state to provide interpreter service. Unfortunately, this part of our original statute addressing the right of a person to have an interpreter services was removed several years when it had been revised.

The community with hearing loss as well as the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired has become frustrated in responding to various entities regarding the rights of people who are deaf and hard of hearing to receive interpreting services. There is currently no specific statute to identify the circumstances. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing is entitled to an interpreter and there is no indication of who is responsible.

On behalf of the CT Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf, the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind citizens of Connecticut are strongly supporting Bill # 5797, and would like to have this reinstated as a point of clarification and protection for the community with hearing disabilities.

We would appreciate your support in passing the Raised Bill No. 5797.

Thank you.

James L. Pedersen

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MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

• American School for the Deaf • American School for the Deaf Alumni Association •
• American School for the Deaf - Sign Language Program • Association of Late Deafened Adults - CT Chapter •
• NCCC - Collegiate Education for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program • Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired •
• Connecticut Association of the Deaf • Connecticut Deaf Senior Citizens • Deaf-Blind Association of Connecticut •
• Deaf Women of Connecticut • Family Service Woodfield • Gallaudet University Alumni Association - CT Chapter •
• Greater Bridgeport Association of the Deaf • Hartford Club of the Deaf • Independence Unlimited, Inc. •
• International Catholic Deaf Association #34 • Sign Language Instructor's Pool • St. Francis DeSale Catholic Club •
• Sound Off Theatre • Sprint Relay Service/Converse Communication Corporation •