

**Testimony on SB 5797
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I am here today in favor of Raised Bill 5797 "An Act Concerning the Availability of Qualified Interpreter Services". My Center is in support of all measures to ensure that the supply of qualified sign interpreters is expanded, and that people have access to one when needed.

Over the last few years, we have seen a steady erosion of the availability of interpreters for people who are Deaf and even foreign language interpreters. This lack of interpreters is most felt in health care, State and Municipal services and programs, and legal services.

Too often an interpreter is not offered, and even when it is, the service provider or government agency can not secure one in a timely and meaningful fashion. In addition, at times the interpreters provided are not adequately trained or may not be a good match for the individual's needs. In deed, people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing do not all require the same access. Some will require American Sign, some Signed English, some cued speech, a few interpreting for the Deaf/Blind, and others oral interpreting. We must be sure that there is a targeted program with adequate resources to provide for the recruitment, training, and delivery of interpreters. And we also need to have laws and rules that ensure that people who need interpreting will get what they need.

Please approve 5797. Thank you for hearing us today.