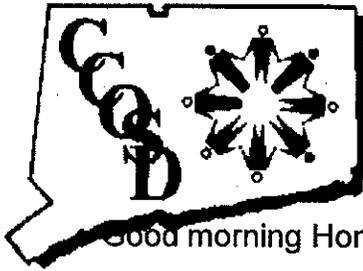


Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf



March 16, 2009

Good morning Honorable Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Susan V. Pedersen. As President of Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf (CCOSD), it is urgent for me to be here about Bill 6375, and to testify against closing or terminating the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI).

Let me relate how CCOSD implemented the formation of CDHI. The CCOSD first was established on December 1, 1969 in West Hartford, and was chartered under the laws of the State of Connecticut as a non-profit organization in 1971. The CCOSD was the first state-level coalition-type organization of the deaf in this country, and it is the only one in the country nowadays. CCOSD made a passage of an Interpreter Law in June 1973.

In the 1970's, the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing citizens did not feel comfortable to depend on their family members, church clergies, hearing adults of deaf parents or staff at American School for the Deaf because they were able to communicate in sign language. These wanted to make their personal decisions confidentially and independently so they asked CCOSD to do something about this issue. CCOSD later got the CDHI established as one of the state agencies on May 31, 1974. Since that year CCOSD serves on the CDHI Board as ex-officio.

Since 1974 CDHI is the primary service provider that consumers still depend when they face personal hardship or communication barriers out in the society. Besides interpreting, counseling and advocacy, CDHI does more than extraordinary miles of doing their jobs such as training or consulting the public and family members who seek information about deafness and related issues. The deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing persons have confidence in the CDHI professional expertise.

On behalf of CCOSD consisting more than 20 organizations, I am pleading you for continue the service of Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Please do not ever think of terminating our only state agency that understands and provides appropriate services to deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing citizens/ tax payers and other service providers that need it. Thank you.

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 •