

To: Connecticut State Legislators
From: Arthur Moore, Simsbury
Date: February 23, 2010
Re: SB 32 – Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

According to the Governor Rell's bill, SB 32, it was recommended that the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) be consolidated with other agencies under the Department of Social Services umbrella. This letter is written to keep CDHI as an independent agency based on several benefits, ranging from employment services, interpreting needs, counseling support, mental health intervention, telecommunications access and many more.

Currently, most deaf people do not have jobs. They are barely holding on their dreams on having respectable jobs and become taxpayers. As for other deaf people who have jobs, they are underpaid with no pay raises or minimal raises. Job promotions are even harder to get. Often, they are first to be laid off during job cuts. CDHI is viewed as a lifesaver in terms of employment needs. Companies within the state of Connecticut need to be motivated in hiring deaf and hard of hearing people such as tax incentives.

Counseling and mental health support is critical within the deaf and hard of hearing community. Depression is a serious issue when the person is faced with challenges associated with hearing loss, rejections by prospective employers, communication challenges and related effects. CDHI is believed to have saved many lives, especially those people who were considering suicide.

As for telecommunications, the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) works closely with the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) in regulating the state telecommunications relay service which is required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The Relay Connecticut service is a state-wide telecommunications relay service for deaf, hard of hearing, speech disabled and hearing people. CDHI has the role as a regulatory agency, ensuring that Connecticut is in compliance with the FCC requirements as well as providing annual reports. In addition, CDHI plays a crucial role in getting Connecticut certified by the FCC in terms of quality relay service as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title IV.

Overall, the state of Connecticut is hereby requested to keep CDHI as an active and independent state agency based on its expertise with the telecommunications needs with the deaf, hard of hearing and speech disabled people within the state. This is one of the many aspects of the CDHI spectrum, involving employment, interpreting services, CART services, counseling and many more.

Thank you,

Art

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arthur Moore". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Art".