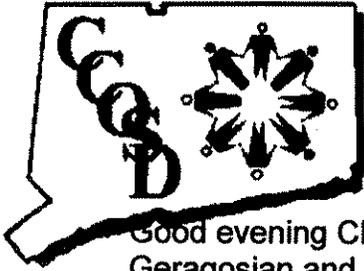


Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf



February 11, 2010

Good evening Chairpersons Senator Toni Harp & Representative John Geragosian and Appropriations Committee:

My name is Susan V. Pedersen. As President of Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf (CCOSD), it is urgent for me to testify about the concern of Governor Rell's proposal affecting the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI). Department of Social Services (DSS) is not providing any services of counseling, case management and advocacy to any "face to face" clients as CDHI does.

Let me first relate how CCOSD led the state government to implement the state agency called Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. 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. CCOSD made a state 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 address the state legislators about it. Eventually through the deaf and hard of hearing mob at the hearing, CDHI later was established on May 31, 1974.

Since this, CCOSD President serves on the CDHI Board as ex-officio, and continues to share the issues of many deaf citizens dealt. CCOSD has no office or any staff to work out the issues so CDHI is doing the vital function as liaison between any state agencies and community services and the citizens with hearing disabilities. These citizens cannot speak up unless they pay for sign language interpreters out of their pockets so CDHI becomes their advocacies or allies in many various situations. CDHI is providing direct client services.

Recently a deaf, single mother made her complaint about lack of interpreting

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 •

services and captioned video at the state-mandated driving training concerning alcohol and drugs for her and her daughter. She was upset that her daughter had to sign all information the driving instructor gave to her class. Deaf parents know that any child of theirs is forbidden to "interpret" because of conflict of interest and robbery of their children's "childhood". They are too young to carry their adult parents' responsibilities.

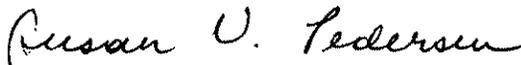
CDHI may seek the resolutions for the private driving training programs with Department of Motor Vehicles and Office of Protection & Advocacy for Persons with Disability on this violation of Americans with Disabilities (ADA). This is one of the current issues that CDHI has to address directly.

Another complaint from deafblind individual is that he could not afford to get the support service provider or personal care attendant so CDHI is participating in the meetings of the deafblind unit at BESB, and provide its expertise to BESB.

If CDHI Interpreting department is solely placed in the DSS, that would be fine but what is about other important units like **direct** counseling including case management that provides emotional and mental stability as well as appropriate information in full context in sign language (ASL) to any client in the deaf-friendly environment?? There is none than Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), Bureau of Education for Blind Services (BESB) and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) that provide their special, direct services limited to the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind clients according to their policies or types of services such as job search; special devices for the deafblind or medication for severe mental health.

On behalf of CCOSD consisting more than 20 organizations, **I ask you to consider in preserving the whole agency of Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired.** It would be more convenient for these clients who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind who are intimidated by the attitude of the service providers who do not understand the aspects of deafness and communication in the huge agency of DSS and other state agencies.

Thank you.



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