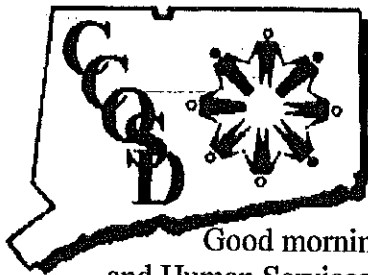


# Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf



February 23, 2010

Good morning Chairpersons Senator Paul Doyle & Representative Toni Walker and Human Services Committee;

My name is Susan V. Pedersen, President of Connecticut Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf (CCOSD). I am here because I am not comfortable with your Bill 32 affecting the CT Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI). Connecticut is very fortunate to have CDHI as one of its precious resources that any deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind individuals can tap freely for assistance, advocacy, counseling and interpreting services. Also it provides assistance to any service providers, families and vendors. **Would Department of Social Services (DSS) provide same services 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 notify CDHI of the issues of many deaf citizens dealt. CDHI is performing its critical function as a liaison between any state agencies or community services and the citizens with hearing disabilities. CDHI becomes their direct advocacies or allies in many various situations. **Can DSS function as our ally or advocate???**

## 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 •

If we are not happy with any services we received from CDHI or other state agencies and community services, we feel free to make any complaints or give any input to the governor or CDHI executive director. **If CDHI is transferred to DSS, would DSS listen to us, consumers? Would the leadership of the DSS be appropriate??**

Recently a deaf, single mother made her complaint about lack of interpreting 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 do signing 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 "childhood". They are too young to carry their adult parents' responsibilities.

CDHI will seek the resolutions for the private driving training programs with assistance of Department of Motor Vehicles and Office of Protection & Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities on this violation of Americans with Disabilities (ADA). This is one of the current issues that CDHI has to address directly. **Would DSS do better job than this???**

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. **Can DSS involve in this???**

**If it is due to budget deficiency, CDHI would be better off to be placed in the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA).** OPA is a small agency that any deaf consumers would feel comfortable to seek for assistance. DSS is too huge that would serve deaf consumers as low incidence population and may provide poor service.

**On behalf of CCOSD consisting more than 20 organizations, I am asking you to vote not to transfer the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) to Department of Social Service (DSS).**

Thank you.

Susan V. Pedersen, President, CCOSD  
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