



State of Connecticut

SENATE

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LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here to speak in support of House Bill 6499, *An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*.

I am particularly interested in language in Section 1 that would classify American Sign Language as a foreign language for the purposes of the prescribed education curriculum.

This concept was originally a part of Senate Bill 491, which I proposed in order to enhance the language requirements in our state's education curriculum. With this language we will be able to mainstream American Sign Language in schools in a way where those who rely on it to communicate will feel they are being accepted and so others who are interested in learning the language have the ability to do so.

Expanding the education curriculum to include different cultures, languages and concepts is a way to develop our education system with the modern needs of society as well as improve our system for future generations. Our goal should be diversifying the bank of knowledge that our children receive while in school, so that they can grow and meet the needs of our society in a greater capacity. Their knowledge base should go beyond what they are most familiar and comfortable with.

Additionally, accepting American Sign Language as a foreign language in our education curriculum promotes an acceptance for those who rely upon American Sign Language to communicate. It mainstreams the language, and lessens any alienation that is felt by those who utilize it. Acceptance and appreciation for the differences in people are parts of the education that we owe our children.

I urge the committee too support House Bill 6499, in order to expand the range of knowledge that our children are receiving through their education.

Thank you,

Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District