

HB-5321

Testimony

House Bill 5321: An Act Concerning Interpreter Qualifications. To strengthen and standardize the qualifications of interpreters serving deaf and hard of hearing persons.

My name is Gary Greco, and I the Program Coordinator/Associate Professor of the Interpreter Preparation Program, ASL to English here at Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

The Interpreter Preparation Program here at Northwestern Conn. Community College is the only statewide Interpreter Training of its kind, and has been providing this training since 1977 when, after the establishment of the then, Career Education for the Deaf Program began in 1974, there was an identified need to train individuals to go on in becoming Professional Certified Sign Language Interpreters in Connecticut and beyond.

Many students who have graduated from our Associates Degree program have been able to pass the written portion of the National Interpreter Certification, (NIC) which makes them eligible to interpret in the educational setting. However, to become fully certified, and to sit for the performance portion of the NIC, now requires a Bachelor's Degree, per the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (RID) mandate. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf is the National Certifying Body that grants certification to eligible candidates.

This bill coincides and supports the completion of a Bachelors Degree within a 3 year time frame to sit for, and pass the performance portion of the NIC.

As a result of the National Standard qualifications and skill to become a certified interpreter, NCCC/IPP continues to evolve and raise their standards to provide an educational experience that meets these requirements. One such example is NCCC's continued collaboration with CCSU to create a new articulation agreement that will provide students with the credits needed for a smooth transition into a Bacheloriante Degree Program (as a result of this, CCSU is the first State University within the ConSCU System that accepts ASL as a Modern Language) while having the option to work in education which will enhance their skills to pass the performance portion of the NIC and become fully certified. At which time they will be able to interpret in a variety of settings.

I would like to ask at this time for all the Interpreters in this room who are here, and who are alumni of NCCC's Interpreter Preparation Program to stand. These are the products of our excellent program which truly maintains our reputation as "The small college that does great things". Many of you here today have seen these individuals standing next to the Governor in times of state emergencies providing critical information in keeping Connecticut's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community informed.

NCCC supports and endorses this bill, (House Bill 5321: An Act Concerning Interpreter Qualifications. To strengthen and standardize the qualifications of interpreters serving deaf and hard of hearing persons.) in becoming law.

Thank you very much,

Gary Greco