



## AMERICAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

*Edward F. Peltier, Executive Director*

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March 13, 2014

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

Good morning. My name is Jeffrey Bravin and I am currently the Chief Operating Officer/Assistant Executive Director at the American School for the Deaf (ASD). I also serve on the Board for the Department of Rehabilitation Services or DORS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services division (formerly known as the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired or CDHI.) I am here on behalf of ASD to support the Raised Bill No. 5321 – An Act Concerning Interpreter Qualifications.

The Bill, as raised, is enhancing the qualifications required for all interpreters in the State of Connecticut which is in line with the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. This is the nationally recognized member organization that advocates for excellence in delivery of interpretation and transliteration services between people who use sign language and people who use spoken language. They work in collaboration with the deaf and hard of hearing communities in encouraging the growth of the profession through the establishment of a national standard for qualified sign language interpreters and transliterators, ongoing professional development and adherence to a code of profession conduct.

This Bill also ensures that every deaf and hard of hearing individual, including children in public schools, gets appropriate interpreting services with an appropriate certified and qualified interpreter, which is sometimes not the case today. We have a responsibility as a state to ensure appropriate access to language and effective communication for every individual.

I also want to take the opportunity to mention that there is a concern about the limited number of qualified, certified sign language interpreters in the State of Connecticut. Currently, we have an Associate degree program for sign language interpreting offered by Northwestern Connecticut Community College and sign language and deaf culture classes offered at the University of Connecticut. However, because the standards now require a Bachelors of Arts degree, we would like for the State to push for our college system to provide for these opportunities. Central Connecticut State University is now exploring the possibility of offering a four-year Bachelor degree program in collaboration with Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

This bill ensures that the State is committed to provide for qualified, certified interpreters so that effective communication can happen for every individual in the state of Connecticut.

Thank you.