

My name is Colleen Hajdasz and I am a Sign Language Interpreter. I am writing in support of **H.B No 6765**(Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING INTERPRETER QUALIFICATIONS AND **H.B. No.6941** (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING STATE AGENCY INTERPRETER SERVICES.

I would like to encourage you to pass Bill 6765 for the following reasons:

- The qualifications and training requirements of this Bill would afford the Deaf Community access to qualified interpreters; however, without a monitoring board the Bill has no teeth. It raises the standards for the interpreters but has no enforcement body monitoring to see if the interpreters and the agency hiring the interpreter are following it.
- Please pass the Bill with the monitoring board attached to it. It's time that the Deaf Community here in Connecticut became a priority.

I would also like to encourage you to pass Bill 6941 for the following reasons:

- This Bill asks that all state agencies call The DORS interpreting unit before calling a private or non-profit company to hire an interpreter. If The DORS Interpreting Unit is completely booked, then the agency can continue to look for another interpreter at another agency.
- This again shows a level of commitment and investment from the State of Connecticut to the Deaf Community by using its own public servants to serve them.
- DORS is also the most financially appealing organization in the state. DORS charges a **flat fee of \$50/hour** to the agency hiring the interpreter, while other agencies charge, depending on the assignment type, upwards of \$100.00. For example, The Department of Motor Vehicles (a state agency) hiring a DORS Interpreter (another state employee) saves the tax payers money. Even the Governor hires the DORS interpreters to work interpret during his press conferences.
- DORS already monitors their employees, making sure they have the appropriate credentials and top qualifications. DORS is the only agency in Connecticut that has a Deaf Interpreter Coordinator. She has intimate knowledge of the Deaf Community's needs and the interpreter's skills. She carefully matches the interpreters to the Deaf Consumer for the best outcomes.
- The DORS Interpreting Unit used to be part of The Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the first Commission on The Deaf in the United States. Through budget cuts it was closed and only the interpreting services and counseling services were transferred to DORS.
- **Last year, The DORS Interpreting Unit handled 6,552 requests for interpreting in a variety of settings which equaled 26,382.59 hours of interpreting. They did this with their staff of qualified interpreters. They are tried and true.** Thank you for taking my points into consideration and caring about The Deaf Community here in Connecticut.