

## **Direct Communication**

Let's imagine we are sipping coffee side by side on Saturday morning in the dining room of a Bed and Breakfast Inn in Vermont. We start with the 'Good Morning' greetings and politely introduce ourselves. And, *without thinking*, we each bring an incredibly rich context to the situation – our own set of experiences and backgrounds. Some of these things we talk about may have a conscious connection while other stuff we share may not. One of us may have an attentiveness of the other person's contextual offering, or may not. Regardless of the conversation, we can distinguish a conversation varies from one person to another, and from one situation to another. We are two individuals who come together and engage in direct communication. *Direct communication is the natural flow of conversing and communicating.*

Unfortunately, it cannot transpire without qualified interpreters.

I bet, right in this moment, are you curious to know if I am a hearing or a deaf person?

Should that matter?

When I enter a situation for my own direct communication, that situation is *mine*. *In those situations that are mine*, I am the person who controls my context, deciding *if and when* I will share parts of my communication. I am quite certain you do the same.

Unfortunately, it cannot arise without qualified interpreters.

The situation becomes increasingly complex as each person's identity comes into play. Throughout our interaction, the interplay of our personal differences and identities engross our communication. The interplay in those moments *can* stir the spirit of the other person.

Unfortunately, our conversation cannot become a reality without qualified interpreters.

What is my reality? I am a 58 year old deaf woman who does not have the privilege of choice to participate in our dining room conversation with you.

## **The Need to Support HB 6765 - Interpreter Qualifications**

A rising number of interpreters are not meeting the needs of and for each and every deaf person here in Connecticut. The field of Certified Interpreters is an emerging and sophisticated profession, and our state *must meet such qualifications*. As the use of unqualified interpreters increases, the need for advanced training and education as well as earning CEUs is mandatory to meet this growing demand. In every single moment of a deaf person's life, the goal of the interpreter is to provide optimal means of communication. The work of interpreters, at the heart of it, is direct communication.

When an interpreter enters the scene, be it at school, the hospital, a funeral, a community event or courtroom, the interaction has absolutely *nothing* to do with them – *nothing at all*. It is the deaf person's situation. The interpreter is fully liable to the identified communication need for a specific deaf person. It is the deaf person's basic human right to expect that the interpreter's specific skills, qualifications, education

and professional ethics that meets the established national standards. The less qualifications the interpreter has to offer, the more the deaf person's situation is at risk.

## **Privilege of Choice**

The heart of this letter is about choices. We have to continue to enhance our ability to recognize and acknowledge privilege in all its forms, and to partner with those who would help us to do so. We need to maintain a willingness to partner with people who will discuss such issues and then to carry out those discussions – with seasoned interpreters, with the Deaf community, with outside people who bring their own diverse intersections to the conversation. We have to be willing to open the conversation as we have a huge responsibility to every deaf person here in our state of Connecticut.

When you recognized and acknowledged the privilege of having access to every single conversation at any given time, it should give you the chills. Maybe move you to tears. I believe you can understand that every deaf person would love to have the same privileges you have on a daily basis. Please make *the choice* to support the HB6765 - Interpreter Qualifications. HB6765 is supporting deaf people to "speak for themselves".

So, think back to our imaginary dining room conversation, I hope you understand that I too deserve the privilege of choice: a friendly 'Hello' or spent our morning chatting about life.

With that thought, I thank you for reading this letter.

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