

To The Human Services Committee

Suzanne Patnode\BILL 6765

Hello: My name is Suzanne Patnode: I am a Certified Registered Sign Language Interpreter for the Deaf. I am employed by a public school system in CT. I agree wholeheartedly with the Raised Bill# 6765 to update and strengthen the requirements of Interpreters working in Educational settings. I previously worked as an Interpreter for CHDI/DORS for 13 years. I work now as an employee in a public school setting. The original Law that was passed in 1998 and signed into action had no affect whatsoever concerning the purpose of this Law. I was working for CDHI when the news came around that the Law of 1998 was going to be passed to require Interpreters to be Certified from a National Testing Agency (RID) (NAD) Some people thought that there was not enough time to become compliant, therefore the Law or the implementation of the new Law was held off until 2003. It has been 17 Years, and here we are again. I have been Interpreting for over 22 years in the community and in Education. Those who are just coming into the field of Interpreting, need to have this Law in place, not only to clarify their goals, and what is required of them, but also to have a standard set just as in any other profession.

A Teacher must pass the Praxis Exam, in order to call themselves a Teacher and to be legally employed in the State of CT. Interpreters must also follow a path and do what is required by the law to become a Legal Interpreter. Is it not the same for many professions? Electricians follow a path until they have satisfied the requirements set forth by CT and become licensed. I would not think to hire an Electrician who was not licensed. Yet daily Schools are hiring people who have yet to meet the basic standards that are required by Law. I do not believe this Law will deter or reduce the amount of qualified Interpreters. Just as having to pass praxis exam does not deter teaching. Having the proper credentials for Interpreting will not discourage those who are serious about the profession. This Law will define a path that must be taken. It will enhance and uplift the profession to where it should have been 17 years ago. This Law is not New information to those in the filed since 1998. This is the Law with some adjustments, that will strengthen and clarify the requirements necessary to become a working registered Interpreter for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in CT.

When (CDHI) was absorbed by (DORS), any hope for monitoring was gone. A Mentoring Board should be in place and without reservation to cost. Without a Mentoring Board, the Law as it was before will have no meaning. We will go backwards and not forwards.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing people depend on the skill of their interpreters. The proposed changes in the Law are an effort to safeguard that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers are obtaining the most skilled Interpreters. There cannot not be another 17-year wait. The time is now to act and do the right thing. Pass Bill 6765.

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