



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES



Department of Rehabilitation Services
Testimony before the Human Services Committee
House Bill 6941 - March 17, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Moore and Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Amy Porter and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitation Services or DORS. I am offering this testimony regarding House Bill 6941, An Act Concerning State Agency Interpreter Services.

This bill would require all state agencies that are unable to fulfill a request for interpreting services with its own interpreting staff to first request such services from DORS before seeking such services elsewhere. Since its greatest impact would fall on all other state agencies we defer to them to know what is best for their needs and the effective operation of their departments.

If the bill were to move forward, we would like to respectfully request a change to the language. The bill requires that all state agencies seeking interpreter services must first turn to interpreters at the Department of Rehabilitation Services. However, DORS is unique among state agencies in this matter since these interpreters are, of course, employees of our agency. Situations do arise when, based on confidentially needs, our agency needs to use an interpreter from outside of DORS rather than one our own employees. Examples of such a situation may be an internal management discussion or a labor-management dispute. Therefore, we respectfully request that, in line 4, after the words "any state agency," the committee add the words "except the Department of Rehabilitation Services." In this way, it will be clear that DORS may continue its practice of using outside providers of interpreting services when circumstances require it.

I want to thank the Committee for your attention to our request. We are, of course, available for any further consultation in this matter.