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March 17, 2015

**Raised H.B. No. 6765**

**Title: AN ACT CONCERNING INTERPRETER QUALIFICATIONS**

**Raised H.B. No. 6941**

**Title: AN ACT CONCERNING STATE AGENCY INTERPRETER SERVICES**

The Honorable Marilyn Moore, State Senate, Chair  
The Honorable Gayle Slossberg, State Senate, Vice-Chair  
Human Service Committee  
Room 2000  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Moore and Senator Slossberg:

As you consider both bill numbers: 6765 & 6941, I urge you to support and strengthen interpreting services as well as certifications that serve the deaf and hard of hearing population of all ages in the state of Connecticut, offer higher standard of qualified interpreters in the legal, medical and educational settings and ensure equal access to communication.

As you may recall a very important issue about an unfortunate event at Mandela Funeral in Johannesburg, South Africa, Jantjie's performance as an interpreter was offensive and embarrassing to the world. The necessity of trusting a certified interpreter along with the proper credentials and professional standards is essential.

I believe the deaf and hard of hearing citizens in Connecticut should be given priority as we ensure that they are able to learn, grow and work within the society with greater access to communication avenues.

I urge you do everything in power to strengthen the above bills by incorporating the following amendments:

- Regarding the bill no. 6765, it should apply to a single interpreter working in every public or private place, including the video relay service (VRS) (or video relay operator) and/or video remote interpreter (VRI). Currently some hospitals and agencies tend to utilize their video remote interpreters via TV, phone and hub. They had signed in the contract agreement with the providers from out of state to provide the VRIs.
- In the educational setting some schools tend to hire teacher aide to take a dual role as interpreter, as may not be certified. The necessary steps for you to consider are something that there should be someone to monitor and enforce the proper credentials of the interpreter. All deaf and hard of hearing children in the public or private school system should be given the right to a free, appropriate public education, as well as entitled to equal access and an equal opportunity to participate in the classrooms.

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- Direct fees by collecting from the interpreter registry membership in Connecticut and subsidy from taxes or fees charged to the interpreters' invoices submitted by the interpreting unit in the Dept. of Rehab. Services toward the establishment of the State Interpreting Monitoring Board. The Monitoring Board is a necessity to oversee, monitor, and enforce the registry of interpreters, as well as agencies that hire interpreters. The registry should be formed to promote awareness and visibility to the state of Connecticut. The registered interpreters should bring the state of CT card as similar to the CT driver license.

Importantly, the state of Connecticut should establish the fee schedule for the interpreters working in the type of settings such as community (or general), educational, legal and medical. This fee schedule will help a positive step to ensure the minimum rate level and the rate cap. Some agencies overcharge the rate which it happens often because they are out of state, not in the state of CT. Some schools could not afford it because of lack of the fee schedule to help them become aware about interpreters with credentials and the rate levels. As result of the passage of the above bills, the certification restrictions may impose on numerous occupations in some agencies, hospitals, schools and businesses cause interpreters to enter in the black market.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

CM Boryslawskyj