

March 16, 2015

RE: H.B. No. 6941 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING STATE AGENCY INTERPRETER SERVICES.

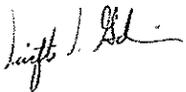
Chairpersons Senator Moore and Representative Abercrombie, Vice-chairs Senator Slossberg and Representative McGee and members of the Human Services Committee,

I wish to submit my complete support of HB number 6941 regarding interpreting services for state agencies.

This bill will produce a savings for the state while maintaining high quality interpreter services.

- It is not a mandate on state agencies, but will create a preference that we look first to use the interpreting staff we already have before hiring outside firms to do the work.
- Prior to 1998, state agencies were required to use Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) interpreters – however, during Governor Rowland’s administration removed this requirement for reasons that were not clear. Now state agencies can hire any company that offers services, with limited oversight or quality control.
- The result is that state agencies are increasingly hiring non-profit and for-profit companies to provide interpreting services. These companies are usually not aware of our state’s statutory regulations for sign language interpreters, leading them to contract with interpreters who are not registered per statute with the state and are often of inferior skills.
- Outsourcing of interpreting services has come at an increased cost to CT taxpayers and removes an important opportunity for oversight by the Commission as to the quality of interpreting services.
- State agencies should be required to use interpreters offered by DORS, or at the very least contact them first to serve their needs.
- There are about 40 interpreters working for DORS. When the agency receives a request to provide services, state employees are given assignments based on their accreditations and experience. This is a level of quality control that is lost when work is given to private entities.

Submitted respectfully,



Dwight D. Godwin