

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

REREVISED

*This Version Includes All Amendments
Adopted in the Second House*

LLS NO. 26-0417.02 Jennifer Berman x3286

HOUSE BILL 26-1109

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING THE COMMISSION OF A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF**
102 **ADDITIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR THE**
103 **DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY WITH**
104 **RESPECT TO SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION SERVICES**
105 **PROVIDED IN THE STATE.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill requires the executive director of the department of human services (executive director), in collaboration with the division for the

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

SENATE
3rd Reading Unamended
May 4, 2026

SENATE
Amended 2nd Reading
May 1, 2026

HOUSE
3rd Reading Unamended
March 24, 2026

HOUSE
Amended 2nd Reading
March 23, 2026

deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind (division), to enter into a contract with a third-party researcher to study whether additional consumer protections for the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community, with respect to using sign language interpreters, are needed in the state. The executive director and third-party researcher shall enter into the contract on or before July 1, 2027, and the third-party researcher shall report its findings and conclusions to the executive director and the division on or before July 1, 2028.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-21-106, **amend**
3 (1)(f) and (1)(g); and **add** (1)(h) and (10) as follows:

4 **26-21-106. Division for the deaf, hard of hearing, and**
5 **deafblind - creation - powers, functions, and duties - programs -**
6 **report - rules - definitions - repeal.**

7 (1) The division for the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind is
8 created in the communication services for people with disabilities
9 enterprise. The powers, functions, and duties of the division include:

10 (f) Approving a sign language interpreter's certifications as valid
11 and reliable in accordance with section 6-1-707 (1)(e)(I)(B); ~~and~~

12 (g) Coordinating the provision of a telecommunications relay
13 service program for individuals in the state who are deaf, hard of hearing,
14 or deafblind or speech-disabled. In doing so, this service shall:

15 (I) Conform with section 401 of the federal "Americans with
16 Disabilities Act of 1990", 47 U.S.C. sec. 225, including the provision for
17 state application to the federal communications commission for
18 certification; AND

19 (II) Meet or exceed all operational, technical, and functional
20 minimum standards in federal communications commission regulations
21 governing telecommunication relay services under 47 CFR 64 subpart F

1 and 47 CFR 9 subpart E; AND

2 (h) COORDINATING WITH ANY THIRD-PARTY RESEARCHER
3 CONTRACTED BY THE BOARD PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (10) OF THIS
4 SECTION TO STUDY THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLIND
5 COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO USING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER
6 SERVICES.

7 (10) (a) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, THE BOARD, IN
8 CONSULTATION WITH THE DIVISION, MAY ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH
9 A THIRD-PARTY RESEARCHER TO CONDUCT A STUDY FOR THE DEAF, HARD
10 OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO USING SIGN
11 LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE, WHICH STUDY MAY INCLUDE
12 CONSIDERATION OF CONSUMER PROTECTIONS REGARDING SIGN LANGUAGE
13 INTERPRETER SERVICES. IF THE BOARD ENTERS INTO A CONTRACT WITH A
14 THIRD-PARTY RESEARCHER TO CONDUCT A STUDY, THE THIRD-PARTY
15 RESEARCHER SHALL COORDINATE WITH THE DIVISION REGARDING THE
16 REQUIRED PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY, WHICH REQUIRED PARAMETERS
17 MUST INCLUDE:

18 (I) INTERVIEWS:

19 (A) WITH SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE;

20 (B) WITH MEMBERS OF THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, AND
21 DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY WHO HAVE WORKED WITH SIGN LANGUAGE
22 INTERPRETERS REGARDING THEIR EXPERIENCE AS CONSUMERS OF SIGN
23 LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION;

24 (C) WITH LANGUAGE SERVICE COMPANIES;

25 (D) THAT ARE MADE FULLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE INTERVIEWEES,
26 INCLUDING ACCESS TO CERTIFIED AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
27 INTERPRETERS. INTERVIEWERS SHALL HAVE PROFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF

1 DEAF CULTURE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE
2 DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY.

3 (E) TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, WITH INTERVIEWEES WHO ARE
4 REPRESENTATIVE OF A RANGE OF AGES, RACIAL AND ETHNIC
5 BACKGROUNDS, SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, RURAL AND URBAN
6 AREAS, CULTURALLY DEAF AND LATE-DEAFENED INDIVIDUALS, AND
7 CONSUMERS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE RECEIVING BOTH CERTIFIED AND
8 UNCERTIFIED IN-PERSON AND REMOTE VIDEO SIGN LANGUAGE
9 INTERPRETATION SERVICES;

10 (II) COLLECTION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA:

11 (A) ABOUT WHETHER THE UNREGULATED PRACTICE OF SIGN
12 LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION CLEARLY HARMS OR ENDANGERS THE
13 HEALTH, SAFETY, OR WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC; AND

14 (B) THAT MAY BE RELEVANT TO OTHER FACTORS THAT COULD BE
15 INCLUDED IN A FUTURE SUNSET REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF
16 REGULATORY AGENCIES CONSIDERS PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-34-104.1
17 (4) WHEN ENGAGING IN ITS SUNRISE REVIEW PROCESS;

18 (III) INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF THE
19 PROFESSION, INCLUDING ANY CHANGES IN THE PROFESSION OVER THE LAST
20 DECADE; AND

21 (IV) COMPARATIVE RESEARCH REGARDING OTHER STATES'
22 REGULATION OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION PROFESSION,
23 INCLUDING A REVIEW OF REGULATION BY AT LEAST ONE STATE WITH:

24 (A) LONG-STANDING REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION;

25 (B) RECENTLY ENACTED REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION; AND

26 (C) RECENTLY MODIFIED REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION.

27 (b) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2028, ANY THIRD-PARTY RESEARCHER

1 CONTRACTED TO CONDUCT THE STUDY SHALL PREPARE A FINAL REPORT OF
2 THEIR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUBMIT THE
3 REPORT TO THE BOARD AND THE DIVISION.

4 (c) THIS SUBSECTION (10) AND SUBSECTION (1)(h) OF THIS SECTION
5 ARE REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2029.

6 **SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
7 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
8 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August
9 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a
10 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the
11 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
12 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect
13 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
14 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
15 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.