



HOUSE BILL 26-1109

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER QUALITY PROTECTIONS

SPONSORS: REP. STEWART K., REP. JOSEPH, SENATOR DANIELSON



BACKGROUND

Since 1991, members of the deaf and hard of hearing community in Colorado have been asking the General Assembly to create a license for sign language interpreters. There have been a handful of sunrise reports, but no license has ever been created. Over 30 states have some sort of licensing scheme, including state like Maryland, who just recently created their license.

Two of the key missing factors have been the “proof of harm” and the fact that there are existing regulatory schemes through professional associations. However, since the expanded use of virtual interpretative services in 2020, both of these factors have failed to prevent widespread harm, and recent statewide outreach has shown the need for a license persists and is now greater than ever.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

HB26-1109 requires the following:

Creates a community in-reach survey that does the following:

- Builds a “proof of harm” case for future professional licensure requests and better qualitative data collection. This study should include community outreach and surveys and interviews from the community and interpreters. Comparative research reviewing licensure models in Massachusetts (a potential positive model), Maryland (to understand recent controversies regarding certification/licensure), and Michigan (to analyze why regulations may have led to provider attrition).
Explores the possibility of adding Utah certification to the list of certifications recognized in Colorado. This additional certification could be added to the In-
- Reach study as part of updating the state’s regulatory framework.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why not just ask for a sunrise report now?

If we were to request a sunrise report now, it would likely come back similar to the past handful of reports that have been conducted over the previous 30 years. We need to first gather concrete evidence and data of harm to show harm that we can then produce for the report.

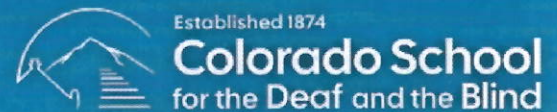
Will this bill solve the problem?

No, but like many issues the General Assembly works on, through diligent progress and incremental change, over the next several years we can solve the problem. This bill is a crucial first step that that process.

Is there a Fiscal Note?

No and Yes! To complete this study, the Division will need more money, however because it is an enterprise fund generated from a fee that is collected to run the division and its services, **the money for this program does not come from the general fund.**

Groups who Support HB26-1109



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