



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 912

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6932

House of Representatives, May 14, 2025

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. WALKER of the 93rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE INTERPRETING STANDARDS BOARD.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established an
2 Interpreting Standards Board. The board shall be comprised of nine
3 members, who shall be appointed not later than October 1, 2025, by the
4 director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind
5 or Hard of Hearing, in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.
6 Said board shall be located within the Bureau of Services for Persons
7 Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of
8 Aging and Disability Services. The board shall:

9 (1) Establish education, training and certification requirements for
10 interpreters working in special settings, including community,
11 educational, legal and medical settings, to be used by the bureau and
12 the department when issuing annual interpreter registration cards that
13 specify in which settings the interpreters are qualified to offer services;

14 (2) Establish operational standards for organizations and providers
15 supplying interpreting services in these settings;

16 (3) Expand, in consultation with the bureau director, interpreter
17 access to educational, training, internship, apprenticeship, mentorship
18 and credentialing opportunities and promote access to such
19 opportunities to grow the pool of interpreters in the state;

20 (4) Receive and review all complaints concerning noncompliance
21 with section 17a-838 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and
22 (A) forward complaints the board substantiates concerning violations of
23 subsection (j) of section 17a-838 of the general statutes, as amended by
24 this act, to the local police department in the community where the
25 interpreter permanently resides, if a state resident, and the two national
26 registries for interpreters, (B) inform the Commissioner of Aging and
27 Disability Services of such complaints, (C) inform the director of the
28 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
29 Hearing of such complaints, and (D) notify the Connecticut Registry of
30 Interpreters for the Deaf of such complaints; and

31 (5) Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Aging and
32 Disability Services on regulations and legislation concerning
33 qualifications of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
34 of hearing.

35 (b) The director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,
36 Deafblind or Hard of Hearing, in consultation with the Commissioner
37 of Aging and Disability Services, shall appoint the membership of the
38 board, in accordance with the provisions of this subsection. All
39 members of the board appointed pursuant to this subsection shall have
40 expressed a willingness to serve on the board and not less than six
41 appointments to the board shall be reflective of the geographic and
42 racial diversity of the state. The board shall consist of the following
43 members:

44 (1) The president of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, or the
45 president's designee;

46 (2) The president of the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the
47 Deaf, or the president's designee;

48 (3) The president of the DeafBlind Association of Connecticut, or the
49 president's designee;

50 (4) Two interpreter professionals, including one member
51 representing deaf interpreter professionals and one member
52 representing hearing interpreter professionals; and

53 (5) Four consumers of interpreting services, one each representing
54 consumers who are hearing, deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

55 (c) Interpreter professionals and consumers appointed to the board
56 shall, for not less than three years, (1) have been residents of the state,
57 and (2) have experience providing or using interpreting services,
58 interacting with persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and
59 familiarity with interpreting issues and professional standards for
60 interpreting. Priority in interpreter professional appointments shall be
61 given to those who, for not less than three years, have been certified or
62 registered interpreters involved in the delivery of interpreting services
63 for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons.

64 (d) The director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,
65 Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing shall stagger the terms of board members
66 appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this
67 section. The director shall initially appoint two interpreter professionals
68 and two consumer board members for a term of three years and the
69 other two consumer board members for a term of two years. Following
70 the initial terms, the director shall appoint board members appointed
71 pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this section for
72 terms of two years on a staggered basis.

73 (e) Board members shall elect a chairperson and such other officers
74 as the board deems advisable at the first meeting of the board, which
75 shall be held not later than November 1, 2025. The board shall meet at
76 least quarterly on alternate months from the scheduled meetings of the

77 Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
78 Hearing, established under section 17a-836 of the general statutes, as
79 amended by this act.

80 (f) Interpreters and applicants for an interpreter registration card
81 holding different certificates or credentials from recognized national
82 and state interpreter credentialing organizations may apply to the
83 Interpreting Standards Board for an approved acceptable credential
84 equivalent or substitute, or a waiver from complying with state
85 interpreting standards starting on the date that such waiver may be
86 granted for a period of time not to exceed three years, as determined by
87 the board. Upon review of the application for a credential equivalent,
88 the Interpreting Standards Board may recommend such substitute
89 credential or waiver to the bureau director along with a determination
90 as to within which settings the applicant is qualified to work.

91 (g) Upon receiving a complaint concerning a violation of state law
92 regarding interpreter services, the Interpreting Standards Board shall
93 review the complaint and, if it deems necessary, schedule a hearing in
94 accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes. The director of the
95 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
96 Hearing may suspend any state registration of the person accused in the
97 complaint for not more than ninety days while the complaint is being
98 investigated. The board shall provide a written notice to the person or
99 entity accused of violating such law not later than thirty days prior to
100 any hearing, which shall be held in a setting that is open to the public. If
101 the board determines an interpreter has violated the interpreter code of
102 professional conduct of a national or state professional interpreter
103 certifying body, the board shall file a report with such body and the
104 person or entity for whom the interpreter was providing interpreting
105 services at the time of the alleged violation.

106 (h) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may adopt
107 regulations, in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes, to
108 implement the provisions of this section.

109 Sec. 2. Section 17a-838 of the general statutes is repealed and the

110 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

111 (a) For the purposes of this section:

112 (1) "Community setting" means any setting, other than those
113 specifically identified as educational, legal or medical, including, but
114 not limited to, any setting involving everyday life activities such as
115 information sharing, employment, social services, entertainment and
116 civic and community engagements;

117 (2) "Bureau" means the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,
118 Deafblind or Hard of Hearing;

119 [(2)] (3) "Department" means the Department of Aging and Disability
120 Services;

121 [(3)] (4) "Interpreting" means the translating or transliterating of
122 English concepts to a language concept used by a person who is deaf,
123 deafblind or hard of hearing or the translating of a deaf, deafblind or
124 hard of hearing person's language to English concepts through the use
125 of American Sign Language, English-based sign language, cued speech,
126 oral transliterating and information received tactually;

127 [(4)] (5) "Deafblind" means combined vision and hearing
128 impairments that challenge a person's ability to communicate, interact
129 with others, access information and move about safely;

130 [(5)] (6) "Educational setting" means any setting where interpretive
131 services are provided concerning education-related matters, including,
132 but not limited to, all schools, school-based programs, services and
133 activities and other educational programs;

134 [(6)] (7) "Legal setting" means any criminal or civil action involving a
135 court of competent jurisdiction, any investigation or action conducted
136 by a duly authorized law enforcement agency, employment-related
137 hearings, appointments and situations requiring the presence of an
138 attorney;

139 [(7)] (8) "Medical setting" means gatherings or gathering places where
140 physical health, mental health, or both are addressed, including, but not
141 limited to, hospitals, clinics, assisted living and rehabilitation facilities,
142 mental health treatment sessions, psychological evaluations, substance
143 abuse treatment sessions, crisis intervention and appointments or other
144 treatment requiring the presence of a doctor, nurse, medical staff or
145 other health care professional; and

146 [(8)] (9) "Transliterating" means converting or rendering English
147 concepts to a language concept used by a person who is deaf, deafblind
148 or hard of hearing or the translating of a deaf, deafblind or hard of
149 hearing person's language concept to English concepts.

150 (b) Except as provided in subsections (g) and (h) of this section, all
151 persons providing interpreting services shall register, annually, with the
152 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
153 Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services. Such
154 registration shall be on a form prescribed or furnished by the
155 [Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services] bureau and shall
156 include the registrant's name, residential or business address, or both,
157 contact information, including, but not limited to, phone number, place
158 of employment as interpreter and interpreter certification or credentials.
159 The [department] bureau shall (1) issue interpreter identification cards
160 for those who register in accordance with this section, and (2) maintain
161 a current listing on [its] the Internet web site of the Department of Aging
162 and Disability Services of such registered interpreters, categorized by
163 interpreter settings for which they are qualified. The [department]
164 bureau, in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board
165 established pursuant to section 1 of this act, may also require
166 documentation of the registrant's training hours. The [department]
167 bureau shall annually issue interpreter identification cards listing the
168 type of settings in which the registrant is qualified to interpret, and may,
169 in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board established
170 pursuant to section 1 of this act, issue to a qualified candidate an
171 acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver of not more than three years
172 from the requirements of this section. The department shall establish an

173 Internet web page containing information about services for deaf,
174 deafblind and hard of hearing individuals. The department's Internet
175 web page shall include, but not be limited to, information related to such
176 services provided by the department and the Departments of Social
177 Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Children and
178 Families.

179 (c) Except as provided in subsections (b), (g) and (h) of this section,
180 no person shall provide interpreting services in the state, including in a
181 community setting, unless such person is registered with the Bureau of
182 Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within
183 the Department of Aging and Disability Services according to the
184 provisions of this section, holds recognized national or state interpreter
185 credentials determined by the [department] Interpreting Standards
186 Board, established pursuant to section 1 of this act, to be acceptable for
187 interpreting purposes where appropriate in [Connecticut] the state and
188 has met at least one of the following qualifications:

189 (1) (A) Has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
190 written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National
191 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge
192 examination, (B) holds a level three certification provided by the
193 National Association of the Deaf, and (C) (i) documents the achievement
194 of two continuing education units per year for a maximum of five years
195 of training approved by the Commissioner of Aging and Disability
196 Services, and (ii) on or before the fifth anniversary of having passed the
197 National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or
198 the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters
199 for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, has passed the
200 National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf performance examination
201 or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters
202 for the Deaf national interpreter certification examination;

203 (2) (A) Has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
204 written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National
205 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge

206 examination, (B) is a graduate of an accredited interpreter training
207 program and documents the achievement of two continuing education
208 units per year for a maximum of five years of training approved by the
209 commissioner, and (C) on or before the fifth anniversary of having
210 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written
211 generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry
212 of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, has
213 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf performance
214 examination or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry
215 of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreter certification
216 examination;

217 (3) Holds a level four or higher certification from the National
218 Association of the Deaf;

219 (4) Holds certification by the National Registry of Interpreters for the
220 Deaf;

221 (5) For situations requiring an oral interpreter only, holds oral
222 certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf;

223 (6) For situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, holds
224 certification from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification
225 Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
226 written generalist test;

227 (7) Holds a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf interpreter
228 under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf;

229 (8) Holds a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of
230 Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate; or

231 (9) Holds the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter, Approved
232 American Sign Language-English Interpreter, or Approved Sign
233 Language Transliterator by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf
234 and Hard of Hearing.

235 (d) No person shall provide interpreting services in a medical setting

236 unless such person is registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons
237 Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of
238 Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section
239 and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National
240 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation or
241 a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters
242 for the Deaf, (3) a level four or higher certification from the National
243 Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or certification as
244 a deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the
245 Deaf, (5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral
246 certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6)
247 for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, a certification
248 from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has
249 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written
250 generalist test, (7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry
251 of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the
252 credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts
253 Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

254 (e) No person shall provide interpreting services in a legal setting
255 unless such person is registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons
256 Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of
257 Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section
258 and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National
259 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation
260 and a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of
261 Interpreters for the Deaf, (3) a level five certification from the National
262 Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf
263 interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (5)
264 for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral certification
265 from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6) for situations
266 requiring a cued speech transliterator only, certification from the
267 National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has passed the
268 National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test, (7)
269 a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for
270 the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the credential of

271 Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts Commission on the
272 Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

273 (f) No person who is not registered as a qualified interpreter pursuant
274 to this section shall:

275 (1) Engage in the practice of or offer to engage in the practice of
276 interpreting for another person, an agency or an entity;

277 (2) Use the title "interpreter", "transliterator" or a similar title in
278 connection with services provided under his or her name;

279 (3) Present or identify himself or herself as an interpreter qualified to
280 engage in interpreting in this state;

281 (4) Use the title "interpreter", "transliterator" or a similar title in
282 advertisements or communications; or

283 (5) Perform the function of or convey the impression that he or she is
284 an interpreter or transliterator.

285 (g) The requirements of this section shall apply to persons who (1)
286 receive compensation for the provision of interpreting services, and (2)
287 provide interpreting services as part of their job duties. The
288 requirements of this section shall not apply to nonregistered individuals
289 such as family members and friends who voluntarily provide
290 interpreting services at the request of a deaf, deafblind or hard of
291 hearing person.

292 (h) The following individuals shall be exempt from the registration
293 requirements of this section:

294 (1) An individual interpreting at (A) a worship service conducted by
295 a religious entity, or (B) services for educational purposes conducted by
296 a religious entity or religiously affiliated school;

297 (2) An individual engaged in interpreting during an emergency
298 situation, when obtaining a registered interpreter or registered
299 transliterator could cause a delay that may lead to injury or loss to the

300 individual requiring the interpreting services, provided such
301 emergency assistance does not waive any communication access
302 requirements for any entity pursuant to the federal Americans with
303 Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as both
304 may be amended from time to time;

305 (3) An individual engaged in interpreting as part of a supervised
306 internship or practicum in an interpreting program at an accredited
307 college or university or an interpreting mentorship program approved
308 by the department if (A) such interpreting is not in a legal, medical or
309 educational setting, or (B) the individual is accompanied by an
310 interpreter registered pursuant to this section; [or]

311 (4) An interpreter who is certified by a recognized national
312 professional certifying body such as the National Registry of
313 Interpreters for the Deaf or the National Association of the Deaf or a
314 recognized state professional certifying body from outside the state and
315 provides interpreting services in the state for a period of time not
316 exceeding fourteen days during a calendar year; or

317 (5) An interpreter who has received an acceptable credential
318 equivalent or a waiver from the requirements of this section from the
319 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
320 Hearing in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

321 (i) Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing persons may exercise their
322 right to request or use a different registered interpreter than the
323 interpreter provided to interpret for such persons in any interpreting
324 setting in accordance with a nationally recognized interpreter code of
325 professional conduct.

326 (j) Any person who is not registered in accordance with this section
327 who represents himself or herself as an interpreter registered with the
328 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
329 Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services, or
330 who engages in wilful or fraudulent misrepresentation of his or her
331 credentials in an attempt to register with the [department] bureau, shall

332 be guilty of a class C misdemeanor. Failure to renew such registration
333 in a timely manner shall not in and of itself constitute a violation for the
334 purposes of this subsection. For purposes of this subsection, "timely
335 manner" means registration renewal not more than thirty days after
336 such registration has expired.

337 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 17a-835a of the general statutes is
338 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
339 *1, 2025*):

340 (c) The director shall report to the commissioner. The director's duties
341 shall include, but need not be limited to:

342 (1) Assisting in overseeing department employees who provide
343 counseling, interpreting and other assistance to persons who are deaf,
344 deafblind or hard of hearing, except for federally funded vocational
345 rehabilitation employees;

346 (2) Annually updating and publishing on the department's Internet
347 web site and the Internet web page of the bureau established pursuant
348 to subdivision (6) of this subsection a resource guide for persons who
349 are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing;

350 (3) [Assisting in the registration] Registration of state-registered
351 interpreters, including maintaining and publishing on the Internet web
352 page of the bureau and the department's Internet web site a list of such
353 interpreters categorized by the settings in which they are qualified to
354 interpret, in accordance with section 17a-838, as amended by this act;

355 (4) Assisting each state agency, as defined in section 1-79, in
356 appointing an employee of each such agency to serve as a point of
357 contact for concerns related to persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
358 of hearing, pursuant to section 4-61pp, and coordinating efforts to
359 resolve such concerns with such employees serving as a point of contact;

360 (5) Coordinating efforts of the Department of Aging and Disability
361 Services to provide information and referral services to deaf, deafblind
362 or hard of hearing persons on resources available to such persons;

363 (6) Establishing a separate Internet web page on the department's
364 Internet web site for the bureau and including on such web page (A) the
365 meeting schedule, agendas, minutes and other resources of the
366 Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
367 Hearing established pursuant to section 17a-836, as amended by this act,
368 (B) an instructional video with audio and captions on the home page on
369 how persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing can navigate
370 the web page, resources and tools, and (C) other material pursuant to
371 this section;

372 (7) Coordinating responses to consumer concerns, requests for
373 assistance and referrals to resources, including from state agencies;

374 (8) Coordinating education and training initiatives, including, but not
375 limited to, working with (A) local and state public safety and public
376 health officials and first responders on best practices for serving and
377 communicating with deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons, and (B)
378 sign language interpreters, oral interpreters and interpreters who are
379 trained to interpret for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons to
380 maintain or enhance the skills of such interpreters in a variety of
381 settings;

382 (9) Collaborating with interpreting services providers and training
383 organizations to increase opportunities for mentorships, internships,
384 apprenticeships and specialized training in interpreting services for
385 deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons;

386 (10) Partnering with civic and community organizations serving deaf,
387 deafblind or hard of hearing persons on workshops and information
388 sessions regarding new laws, regulations or developments regarding
389 services, programs or health care needs of such persons;

390 (11) Raising public awareness of programs and services available to
391 deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons;

392 (12) Assisting the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority in
393 implementing telecommunication relay service programs for deaf,

394 deafblind or hard of hearing persons. In awarding any contract for such
395 relay service programs, the authority shall consult with the
396 Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services and the director of the
397 bureau;

398 (13) Working with the Governor and Connecticut television stations
399 on ways to make television broadcasts more accessible to persons who
400 are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing; and

401 (14) In consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are
402 Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing established pursuant to section 17a-
403 836, as amended by this act, identifying the needs of deaf, deafblind or
404 hard of hearing persons and addressing policy changes that may be
405 necessary to better serve such persons.

406 Sec. 4. Section 17a-836 of the general statutes is repealed and the
407 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

408 The Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
409 Hearing is hereby created to advocate, strengthen and advise the
410 Governor and the General Assembly concerning state policies affecting
411 persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and their
412 relationship to the public, industry, health care and educational
413 opportunity. The board shall:

414 (1) Monitor services for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of
415 hearing;

416 (2) Establish an annual leadership roundtable meeting with the Board
417 of Regents for Higher Education, the Commissioners of Aging and
418 Disability Services, Public Health, Social Services, Mental Health and
419 Addiction Services, Education, Developmental Services, Children and
420 Families, Early Childhood, Economic and Community Development,
421 Emergency Services and Public Protection, Correction, Housing and
422 Higher Education and the Labor Commissioner, or their designees, to
423 discuss best practices to serve persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
424 of hearing, identify gaps in such services and make recommendations

425 to rectify such gaps;

426 (3) Refer persons with complaints concerning the qualification and
427 registration of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
428 of hearing to the entity designated pursuant to section 46a-10b;

429 (4) Make recommendations for (A) technical assistance and resources
430 for state agencies in order to serve persons who are deaf, deafblind or
431 hard of hearing; (B) public policy and legislative changes needed to
432 address gaps in services; and (C) the qualifications and registration of
433 interpreters pursuant to section 17a-838, as amended by this act. The
434 advisory board shall submit a report on such recommendations and the
435 activities of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind
436 or Hard of Hearing, [in the previous calendar year,] in accordance with
437 section 11-4a, not later than [January] September 1, 2025, and annually
438 thereafter, to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the
439 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
440 appropriations, aging, commerce, education, higher education, housing,
441 human services, the judiciary, labor, public health and public safety.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------|
| Section 1 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2 | <i>October 1, 2025</i> | 17a-838 |
| Sec. 3 | <i>October 1, 2025</i> | 17a-835a(c) |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 17a-836 |

APP *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

| Agency Affected | Fund-Effect | FY 26 \$ | FY 27 \$ |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Aging and Disability Services, Dept. | GF - Cost | 114,000 | 177,000 |
| State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹ | GF - Cost | 40,000 | 66,000 |

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost of \$114,000 in FY 26 and \$177,000 in FY 27 to the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) to support the activities of a new Interpreting Standards Board and two new positions.

ADS will require a Bureau Director and an Administrative Assistant to support the Board, which will result in personal services costs of \$98,000 in FY 26 and \$162,000 in FY 27.² There are corresponding costs to the State Comptroller of \$40,000 in FY 26 and \$66,000 in FY 27 for fringe benefits. Funding of \$16,000 in FY 26 and \$15,000 in FY 27 will cover equipment costs, interpreter support, and transcription services.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

² Currently, the Bureau Director's position is partially funded in FY 26 via ARPA dollars appropriated in 2024.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6932*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE INTERPRETING STANDARDS BOARD.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes the Interpreting Standards Board to set education, training, and certification requirements for interpreters for people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. The board's duties also include reviewing complaints on interpreters who are not complying with qualification standards and other requirements.

The bill specifies that the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing (within the Department of Aging and Disability Service (ADS)) is responsible for certain tasks related to interpreter credential and registration, rather than ADS, including receiving interpreter registrations. The bill allows the bureau, in consultation with the board, to issue a qualified candidate an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver of up to three years from requirements on interpreter registration and credentials.

Lastly, the bill delays, from January 1 to September 1, 2025, the annual reporting deadline for the Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing. The bill removes a provision that limits the report's contents on the advisory board's activities to those conducted in the previous calendar year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, except provisions establishing the board and delaying the reporting requirement take effect July 1, 2025.

INTERPRETING STANDARDS BOARD

The bill establishes the Interpreting Standards Board within ADS's

Bureau of Services for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing. The bill authorizes ADS to adopt regulations to implement these provisions.

Board Appointments

The bureau director must appoint the board by October 1, 2025. The bill requires the bureau director to appoint nine members, six of whom must reflect the state's geographic and racial diversity, as follows:

1. the Connecticut Association of the Deaf president, or designee;
2. the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (CRID) president, or designee;
3. the DeafBlind Association of Connecticut president, or designee;
4. one deaf interpreter professional representative;
5. one hearing interpreter professional representative; and
6. four consumers of interpreting services, one each representing consumers who are hearing, deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing.

Board Member Qualifications and Terms

The bill requires the appointed interpreter professionals and consumers to have been state residents for at least three years and have at least three years of experience providing or using interpreting services and interacting with people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. They must also have familiarity with interpreting issues and professional interpreter standards. For interpreter professionals appointed to the board, the bill gives priority to those who have been certified or registered interpreters involved in delivering interpreting services for deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing people for at least three years.

The bill establishes staggered terms for appointed members by requiring the bureau director to initially appoint two interpreter professionals and two consumers to a three-year term and the other two

consumers to a two-year term. After initial terms, the bureau director must appoint six of the nine board members for two-year terms on a staggered basis.

The bill requires board members to elect a chairperson and other officers as they deem advisable at their first meeting, which they must hold by November 1, 2025. The bill requires the board to meet quarterly on alternate months from scheduled meetings of the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing.

Board Duties

The bill requires the board to do the following:

1. establish education, training, and certification requirements for interpreters working in special settings, including community, educational, legal, and medical settings, for the bureau and ADS to use when issuing annual interpreter registration cards;
2. establish operational standards for organizations and providers supplying interpreting services in these settings;
3. expand, in consultation with the bureau director, interpreter access to educational, training, internship, apprenticeship, mentorship, and credentialing opportunities and promote access to opportunities to grow the pool of interpreters in the state;
4. receive and review all complaints on noncompliance with interpreter qualifications requirements (see below); and
5. make recommendations to the ADS commissioner on regulations and legislation on interpreter qualifications.

INTERPRETER REGISTRATION

Current law requires anyone providing interpreting services to register annually with ADS. The bill specifies that they must instead register with ADS's Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing. The bill correspondingly requires the bureau, rather than ADS, to prescribe registration forms, issue

interpreter identification cards, and maintain a current listing on ADS's website. The bill requires the bureau, rather than ADS, to issue annual identification cards listing the types of settings in which the registrant is qualified to interpret. The bill allows the bureau, rather than ADS, to require documentation of a registrant's training hours, in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board.

CREDENTIAL SUBSTITUTES, EQUIVALENTS, AND WAIVERS

Existing law generally requires anyone providing interpreting services in the state to register, hold recognized national or state interpreter credentials, and meet one of nine separate pathways or combinations of credentials that satisfy certain requirements to provide interpreting services in general (community) settings.

The bill allows interpreters and interpreter registration card applicants who hold different certificates or credentials from recognized national and state interpreter credentialing organizations to apply to the standards board for an approved acceptable credential equivalent or substitute, or a waiver for up to three years from complying with state interpreting standards, as the board determines. After reviewing an application for a credential equivalent, the bill allows the board to recommend to the bureau a substitute credential or waiver and a determination of any qualified settings in which the applicant may work.

The bill allows the bureau, in consultation with the standards board, to issue a qualified candidate an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver for up to three years from the state's registration and credential requirements. Under the bill, interpreters who receive an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver are exempt from registration requirements.

COMPLAINTS

The bill requires the board to receive and review all complaints on noncompliance with interpreter qualification requirements. The board must forward complaints it substantiates on willful or fraudulent

misrepresentation of credentials (a Class C misdemeanor under existing law) to the local police department in the community where the interpreter permanently resides, if it is in the state, and the two national interpreter registries. The bill requires the board to notify the ADS commissioner, the bureau director, and CRID about these complaints.

Under the bill, when the board receives a complaint, it must review the complaint and, if it deems necessary, schedule a hearing in a setting open to the public and in keeping with the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act. The bill allows the bureau director to suspend the state registration of anyone accused in a complaint for up to 90 days while the complaint is investigated. The bill requires the board to give written notice to the person or entity accused of violating state interpreter standards laws at least 30 days before holding a hearing.

If the standards board determines that an interpreter has violated a national or state professional interpreter certifying body's interpreter code of professional conduct, the bill requires the board to file a report with the body and the person who received services at the time of the alleged violation.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill (File 460) to the Appropriations Committee, which reported out a substitute that removed a provision from the underlying bill that eliminated the requirement that interpreters hold at least one of nine sets of credentials described in state law to meet the general credential requirement for interpreters.

Related Bill

sSB 1158 (File 153), favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, establishes a Department on Aging and renames ADS as the "Department of Disability Services."

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/18/2025)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 42 Nay 8 (05/05/2025)