



Substitute House Bill No. 6932

Public Act No. 25-144

***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:

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

(1) Establish (A) education, training and certification requirements for interpreters working in special settings, including community, educational, legal and medical settings, and (B) training needed to provide interpreting services to select populations, including protactile language and tactile language interpreting training to provide such services to deafblind persons and training in interpreting methods to serve non-English speaking persons;

(2) Establish operational standards for organizations and providers supplying interpreting services in these settings and to select

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populations, including, but not limited to, deafblind persons;

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

(4) Receive and review complaints concerning noncompliance with state interpreting standards, and, (A) if the board determines an interpreter has violated the interpreter code of professional conduct of a national or state professional interpreter certifying body, file a report with such body, (B) for substantiated complaints involving interpreters for deafblind persons, file a report with the American Association for the DeafBlind, and (C) file a report on all such substantiated complaints with the protection and advocacy organization for persons with disabilities in the state designated pursuant to section 46a-10b of the general statutes; and

(5) Not later than January 1, 2027, make recommendations to the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services on new interpreter standards, regulations and legislation concerning qualifications of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing.

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

(1) The president of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, or the

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president's designee;

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

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

(4) Two interpreter professionals, including one member representing deaf interpreter professionals and one member representing hearing interpreter professionals, each with training appropriate for providing services in a special setting different from the other, including community, educational, legal and medical settings; and

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

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

(d) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall stagger the terms of board members appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this section. The commissioner shall initially appoint two interpreter professionals and two consumer board members for a term of three years and the other two consumer board members for a term of two years. Following the initial terms, the commissioner shall appoint board members appointed pursuant to

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subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this section for terms of two years on a staggered basis.

(e) Board members shall elect a chairperson and such other officers as the board deems advisable at the first meeting of the board, which shall be held not later than November 1, 2025. The board shall meet at least quarterly.

(f) Interpreters and applicants for an interpreter registration card holding different certificates or credentials from recognized national and state interpreter credentialing organizations may apply to the Interpreting Standards Board for review of whether an approved acceptable credential equivalent or substitute, or a waiver from complying with state interpreting standards starting on the date that such waiver may be granted, for a period of time not to exceed three years, as determined by the board. Upon review of the application for a credential equivalent, the Interpreting Standards Board may recommend such substitute credential or waiver to the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services along with a determination as to within which settings the applicant is qualified to work. The commissioner, in the commissioner's discretion, may grant such substitute credential or waiver.

Sec. 2. Section 17a-838 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(a) For the purposes of this section:

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

(2) "Bureau" means the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,

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Deafblind or Hard of Hearing;

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

[(3)] (4) "Interpreting" means the translating or transliterating of English concepts to a language concept used by a person who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing or the translating of a deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing person's language to English concepts through the use of American Sign Language, protactile language and tactile language for persons who are deafblind, English-based sign language, non-English-based language for non-English speaking persons, cued speech [,] and oral transliterating; [and information received tactually;]

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

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

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

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

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other health care professional; and

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

(b) Except as provided in subsections (g) and (h) of this section, all persons providing interpreting services shall register, annually, with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services. Such registration shall be on a form prescribed or furnished by the [Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services] bureau and shall include the registrant's name, residential or business address, or both, contact information, including, but not limited to, phone number, place of employment as interpreter and interpreter certification or credentials. The [department] bureau shall (1) issue interpreter identification cards for those who register in accordance with this section, and (2) maintain a current listing on [its] the Internet web site of the Department of Aging and Disability Services of such registered interpreters, categorized by interpreter settings for which they are qualified [The department] and by specialized skills such as protactile language or tactile language interpreting for deafblind persons and interpreting for non-English speaking persons. The bureau, in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board established pursuant to section 1 of this act, may also require documentation of the registrant's training hours. The [department] bureau shall annually issue interpreter identification cards listing the type of settings in which the registrant is qualified to interpret. The department shall establish an Internet web page containing information about services for deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing individuals. The department's Internet web page shall include, but not be limited to, information related to such services provided by the department and the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health

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and Addiction Services and Children and Families.

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

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

(2) (A) Has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, (B) is a graduate of an accredited interpreter training

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program and documents the achievement of two continuing education units per year for a maximum of five years of training approved by the commissioner, and (C) on or before the fifth anniversary of having passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf performance examination or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreter certification examination;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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(d) No person shall provide interpreting services in a medical setting unless such person is registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation or a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (3) a level four or higher certification from the National Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or certification as a deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6) for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, a certification from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test, (7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(e) No person shall provide interpreting services in a legal setting unless such person is registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation and a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (3) a level five certification from the National Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6) for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, certification from the

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National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test, (7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) An individual engaged in interpreting during an emergency situation, when obtaining a registered interpreter or registered transliterator could cause a delay that may lead to injury or loss to the individual requiring the interpreting services, provided such emergency assistance does not waive any communication access requirements for any entity pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as both may be amended from time to time;

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

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

(5) An interpreter who has received an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver from the requirements of this section from the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services in accordance with the recommendations of the Interpreting Standards Board pursuant to section 1 of this act; or

(6) An interpreter who is interpreting for an individual who is

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deafblind, until new standards are adopted for such interpreting pursuant to subsection (k) of this section or a state or national standard is established for protactile language or tactile language interpreting.

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

(j) Any person who is not registered in accordance with this section who represents himself or herself as an interpreter registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services, or who engages in wilful or fraudulent misrepresentation of his or her credentials in an attempt to register with the [department] bureau, shall be guilty of a class C misdemeanor. Failure to renew such registration in a timely manner shall not in and of itself constitute a violation for the purposes of this subsection. For purposes of this subsection, "timely manner" means registration renewal not more than thirty days after such registration has expired.

(k) Not later than March 1, 2027, the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall implement policies and procedures in advance of adopting regulations pursuant to chapter 54 that incorporate new interpreter standards based on the recommendations of the Interpreting Standards Board pursuant to section 1 of this act. The commissioner shall post (1) notice of intent to adopt the regulations on the eRegulations System not later than twenty days after the date of implementation of the policies and procedures, and (2) a prominent link to the policies and procedures on the Internet web site of the Department of Aging and Disability Services. Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final regulations are adopted. The commissioner shall submit such

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policies and procedures in proposed regulation form to the legislative regulation review committee not later than twelve months following the date of publication of the notice of intent to adopt regulations as provided for in this subsection.

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

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

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

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

(3) [Assisting in the registration] Registration of state-registered interpreters, including maintaining and publishing on the Internet web page of the bureau and the department's Internet web site a list of such interpreters categorized by the settings in which they are qualified to interpret and by specialized skills such as protactile language or tactile language interpreting for deafblind persons and non-English interpreting for non-English speaking persons, in accordance with section 17a-838, as amended by this act;

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

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resolve such concerns with such employees serving as a point of contact;

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

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

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

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

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

(10) Partnering with civic and community organizations serving deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons on workshops and information

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sessions regarding new laws, regulations or developments regarding services, programs or health care needs of such persons;

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

(12) Assisting the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority in implementing telecommunication relay service programs for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons. In awarding any contract for such relay service programs, the authority shall consult with the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services and the director of the bureau;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Refer persons with complaints concerning the qualification and registration of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing to the entity designated pursuant to section 46a-10b and the Interpreting Standards Board established pursuant to section 1 of this act;

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

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Governor's Action:
Approved July 1, 2025