

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE  
Public Hearing re: House Bill 1596

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Stenographic report of public hearing held at  
Temple University  
Feinstone Lounge  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Wednesday, March 5, 2008, 10:00 a.m.

HONORABLE Michael Sturla, COMMITTEE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN  
HONORABLE William Adolph, COMMITTEE MINORITY CHAIRMAN

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1                   (Whereupon, the proceeding  
2                   commenced at approximately,  
3                   10:15 a.m.)

4           CHAIRMAN STURLA: I think that we are  
5 ready, here, to get started. Call to order the  
6 meeting of the House of Professional Licensure  
7 Committee.

8           Before we get started, I want to take care  
9 of a little bit of housekeeping here. We have  
10 testimony that were submitted in letter form by  
11 Jessica Bentley-Sassaman, Tess Deckert, Ramona  
12 Hurst, Vera Kuzyk, April Nelson, Marci Stoner  
13 and Amanda Zimmerman. And, so, we will enter  
14 those into the record.

15           Additionally, I would like the members to  
16 introduce themselves and where they are from.

17           I will start with myself. I am State  
18 Representative Mike Sturla, Chairman of the  
19 Committee from Lancaster.

20           We will go to my left here and down to my  
21 right.

22           REPRESENTATIVE KOTIK: Representative Nick  
23 Kotik, Allegheny County.

24           REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Representative

1 Dick Stevenson, Mercer County and Butler  
2 County.

3 REPRESENTATIVE YUDICHAK: John Yudichak,  
4 Luzerne County.

5 MS. LANCOLM: Christine Lancolm -- to the  
6 Committee.

7 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Bill Adolph, Republican  
8 Chairman from Delaware County, 165 Legislative  
9 District.

10 MS. TREMMEL: Marlene Tremmel, Executive  
11 Director.

12 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Stan Saylor, York  
13 County.

14 REPRESENTATIVE YEWCIC: Tom Yewcic,  
15 Cambria and Somerset County.

16 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

17 I will point out that, what we will be  
18 discussing today is the proposed amended  
19 version of the Legislative as opposed to the  
20 House Bill 1596, itself. That way, it will  
21 save us a lot of changes that we have already  
22 agreed on, that we want to make.

23 So, with that, first up is State  
24 Representative Todd Eachus who is the prime

1 sponsor for it.

2 REPRESENTATIVE EACHUS: Thank you,  
3 Mr. Chairman and Chairman Sturla and Chairman  
4 Adolph. It is an honor to be here at Temple  
5 University with the Committee to address an  
6 important issue affecting those who need  
7 interpreter and transliterator services in  
8 Pennsylvania. First and foremost, I would like  
9 to thank the Chairman and the Committee for  
10 allowing me to be here today.

11 In 2004, the General Assembly passed, and  
12 Governor Rendell signed into law Act 57, the  
13 Sign Language Interpreter and Transliterator  
14 State Registration Act, which created a state  
15 registration for interpreters and  
16 transliterators and provided much needed  
17 consumer protections for the deaf and hard of  
18 hearing.

19 However, last spring, an unintended  
20 consequence of Act 57 was brought to my  
21 attention, which this legislative initiative  
22 addresses. Specifically, from my  
23 understanding, graduates of accredited programs  
24 in Pennsylvania who still need field experience

1 have been virtually shut out of the job market  
2 because they do not have state registration,  
3 yet they need experience to pass the tests  
4 required to obtain state registration from the  
5 Department of Labor and Industry.

6 Based on recommendations from the Registry  
7 of Interpreters and the Deaf's National Office,  
8 I introduced House Bill 1597 and, subsequently,  
9 worked with the Department of Labor and  
10 Industry for the deaf and hard of hearing on an  
11 amendment that will tighten the language to  
12 ensure continued consumer protection and give  
13 recent graduates an outlet to gain field  
14 experience needed to obtain state registration  
15 in Pennsylvania and be gainfully employed in  
16 the Commonwealth.

17 House Bill 1596, coupled with the  
18 amendment, will amend Act 57 of 2004, and add  
19 Section 5.1. Section 5.1 provides Provisional  
20 Registration, a concept developed by a policy  
21 paper by Ben Hall, President of the RID, which  
22 suggests that a graduate of an Interpreter  
23 Education Program with an associate degree or  
24 higher, has five years from the graduation date

1 to obtain national credentials.

2 After reviewing comments made by the  
3 Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of  
4 Hearing and the Department of Labor and  
5 Industry, Section 5.1 will do the following:  
6 provide a provisional registration in  
7 Pennsylvania; two, require an applicant to  
8 apply to the Department of Labor and Industry  
9 Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing to -- the  
10 application must include a \$100 fee, which is  
11 consistent with other state registration, proof  
12 that the applicant graduated from an  
13 interpreter education program with an associate  
14 degree or higher, from an accredited  
15 institution of higher education within five  
16 years of the application date. Lastly, proof  
17 that an applicant passed the written  
18 examination approved by the Office of Deaf and  
19 Hard of Hearing.

20 The Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
21 will review the application and issue a  
22 provisional registration if the applicant's  
23 application is complete and the aforementioned  
24 requirements are met, which include the

1 applicant being 18 years or older and any  
2 requirements deemed appropriate by the office.

3 The provisional registration will be  
4 issued for one year and cannot be used in legal  
5 settings, mental health settings, unless  
6 accompanied by an interpreter who has a state  
7 registration, a medical setting unless the  
8 patient is informed the interpreter has a  
9 provisional registration and the patient has  
10 the right to request and be provided an  
11 interpreter with state registration.

12 The provisional registration can be  
13 renewed twice consecutively. The same  
14 application requirements apply to every  
15 renewal, coupled with proof of the completion  
16 of 20 hours of professional development.

17 If an applicant changes their personal  
18 information for any reason or violates the act,  
19 the same procedures and penalties apply.

20 However, if a provisional registration is  
21 revoked, it is not an opportunity to obtain  
22 another provisional registration. Rather, the  
23 individual may apply for a state registration  
24 no earlier than five years from the date of



1 revocation.

2 That summarizes the bill and the  
3 amendment. And the intent is to keep our  
4 educated students in the Commonwealth and give  
5 them the opportunity to have the needed  
6 experience while providing the proper consumer  
7 protection for those who are deaf or hard of  
8 hearing.

9 Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add,  
10 that what you have before you on this panel are  
11 really what I would say are the foremost  
12 experts on what this means to the capacity that  
13 it provides the service that now is lacking.

14 What we have seen is, a shortage of young  
15 people staying in Pennsylvania because of this  
16 barrier that I think was an unintended  
17 consequence.

18 So, I appreciate the Committee's  
19 indulgence, and I am happy to stick around so  
20 that the -- I could be part of a discussion  
21 with your panelists.

22 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

23 I will note quickly that we have been  
24 joined by Representative Gergely, and open up

1 for questions for the representatives.

2 I would point out that, we do have a lot  
3 of experts. So, if it is dealing with the  
4 technicalities of the art of interpreting and  
5 transliteration, I would suggest that you  
6 probably wait for those experts. If you have a  
7 question, specifically, about the mechanics of  
8 the legislation, that is probably best  
9 addressed by Representative Eachus.

10 Representative Stevenson.

11 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Thank you,  
12 Mr. Chairman, and thank you Representative  
13 Eachus.

14 Just a quick question on the provisional  
15 registration renewal. It states it may be  
16 renewed twice consecutively. What would be the  
17 reason to have to do it twice, and what happens  
18 at the end of that period?

19 REPRESENTATIVE EACHUS: Okay. I am joined  
20 by my Executive Director of the House of  
21 Democratic Policy Committee, Rachael Manzo.

22 Mr. Chairman, if it would be okay, I am  
23 happy to allow her to address the  
24 Representative's question.

1           REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Thank you.

2           MS. MANZO: Could you repeat the tail end?

3           REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: I was just  
4 wondering, provisional registration may be  
5 renewed twice consecutively, and I assume it  
6 would be renewed because they haven't met the  
7 requirements to be licensed or certified, and  
8 what happens at the end of that second time if  
9 they still haven't qualified?

10          MS. MANZO: They would have to turn in  
11 their original registration to the Department  
12 of Labor and Industry and they would have to  
13 include in that registration to interpret in  
14 the Commonwealth.

15          REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Once that is  
16 taken, they could not get another provisional  
17 registration?

18          MS. MANZO: No. They could not.

19          After reviewing comments made by the  
20 Department of Labor and Industry and some of  
21 the experts that reviewed the initial bill, it  
22 suggested that the five-year national  
23 recommendation was too long and would prefer a  
24 shorter span of time for them to get their

1 continuing educational field experience.

2 So, we reduced it from the original time  
3 in 1596 to three years and required the  
4 continuing educational credits.

5 So, after that three-year period, they  
6 would have to get the state registration.

7 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Thank you very  
8 much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 REPRESENTATIVE EACHUS: Let me just add to  
10 that. In the part of the practical experience  
11 in the field relates to the signing test  
12 itself. The written test, in many cases, is  
13 passed and they can get on and get their -- get  
14 on with their lives. But the practical  
15 experience that gets applied in the field gives  
16 the opportunity for a provisional registration  
17 in many other states.

18 Wisconsin would be an example of a place  
19 that has this opportunity for young people to  
20 make the transition so that they could build  
21 the practical experience and pass that  
22 practical exam component of the registration.

23 So, we want to give them an opportunity,  
24 but not forever, as you said.

1 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

2 Questions from other members?

3 (Whereupon, there was no  
4 response.)

5 REPRESENTATIVE EACHUS: Thank you, again,  
6 Mr. Chairman. I will be about for a little  
7 while.

8 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. Next we have a  
9 panel from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor  
10 and Industry. William Gannon, Executive  
11 Director from the Office of Vocational Rehab,  
12 Sharon Behun, Director of the Office for the  
13 Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Catherine  
14 Wojciechowski. I will let you all introduce  
15 yourself. Catherine is Deputy Chief Counsel to  
16 OVR.

17 I will also point out that at this time,  
18 this committee hearing is being signed by Adele  
19 Wiggins.

20 Okay. With that. we will start the panel.

21 MR. GANNON: Thank you, Chairman Sturla  
22 and Chairman Adolph and members for the  
23 Committee for the opportunity to appear before  
24 you this morning to discuss House Bill 1596 and

1 the proposed amendments to the bill.

2 My name is William Gannon, I am the  
3 executive director of the Office of Vocational  
4 Rehabilitation in the Department of Labor and  
5 Industry. With me today is Sharon Behun on my  
6 left, and Cathy Wojciechowski on my right.

7 Should there be questions after I present,  
8 these two have done most of the work and I  
9 would defer to them on most of the questions.

10 The mission of the Office of Vocational  
11 Rehabilitation is to assist Pennsylvanians with  
12 disabilities to secure and maintain employment  
13 and independence. The Office of the Deaf and  
14 Hard of Hearing is one of the many programs  
15 that help us accomplish this mission.

16 The Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
17 provides advocacy, information and referral to  
18 Pennsylvania's citizens with hearing loss and  
19 those without hearing.

20 The ODHH can advocate for people with  
21 hearing loss who are not receiving proper  
22 services from government or private agencies.  
23 The ODHH stands ready to serve as a liaison,  
24 provide information and assist in opening doors

1 to those in need of such services.

2 Additionally, after a decade long series  
3 of collaborative efforts and activities among  
4 the different stakeholder groups, the Sign  
5 Language Interpreter and Transliterator State  
6 Registration Act, Act 57 of 2004, was passed to  
7 establish quality standards in Pennsylvania.

8 The law specifies that ODHH be responsible  
9 for establishing and implementing the  
10 registration program, monitoring regulations  
11 and enforcing the act.

12 ODHH is committed to ensure that the  
13 spirit of the law and the ideology of the  
14 interpreting profession and practice are upheld  
15 in order to support the ongoing development and  
16 growth of qualify sign language interpreter  
17 programs in Pennsylvania.

18 With that commitment in mind, the  
19 Department and ODHH has worked closely with  
20 Representative Eachus and his staff on various  
21 changes to House Bill 1596, which would amend  
22 the Sign Language Interpreter and  
23 Transliterator Act.

24 The proposed amendments being discussed

1       today affect those efforts.

2               The Sign Language Interpreter and  
3       Transliterator State Registration Act  
4       established a quality standard in the  
5       Commonwealth for individuals who provide sign  
6       language interpreting and transliterating  
7       services. The act prohibits individuals from  
8       providing such services, unless they are  
9       registered with the Office of Deaf and Hard of  
10      Hearing or meet certain exceptions to the  
11      registration.

12              In order to register, the applicant must  
13      provide proof of passing an examination,  
14      testing their knowledge and proficiency in  
15      interpreting and transliteration. Applicants  
16      must also pay \$100 biannually for a  
17      registration fee per the act. And ODHH  
18      administers the act.

19              The act provides eight exceptions that  
20      allow non-registered interpreters to work in  
21      the Commonwealth. The act further ensures  
22      consumer choice in using the services of a  
23      registered or non-registered interpreter.

24              However, as currently enacted, Act 57 does



1 not address the needs of recent graduates of  
2 Interpreter Education Programs, IEPs. Recent  
3 graduates of IEPs possess many skills, however,  
4 most do not have the requisite experience to  
5 take and pass the examination for ODHH  
6 registration.

7 Consequently, as it stands now, recent  
8 graduates cannot register with ODHH, cannot  
9 work in the community unless they meet one of  
10 the exceptions, have limited opportunities to  
11 gain the necessary work experience needed to  
12 prepare for the national certification exam,  
13 which is the Commonwealth minimum standard, and  
14 may be forced to move out of the state to  
15 pursue their career.

16 House Bill 1596 and the accompanying  
17 proposed amendments would alleviate some of  
18 these restrictions, which come -- which some  
19 consider to be burdensome that are placed on  
20 the IEP graduates. If passed, it will allow  
21 recent graduates to apply for provisional  
22 registration, renew their provisional  
23 registration twice, consecutively if they meet  
24 the educational criteria, have expanded

1 opportunity to work in the community,  
2 therefore, gaining the experience necessary to  
3 prepare for the national certification exam,  
4 pursue a career in the Commonwealth, experience  
5 interpreting work in medical settings, work in  
6 a mental health setting accompanied by a state  
7 registered interpreter.

8 Deaf consumers, non-deaf consumers, family  
9 members and other relevant individuals may be  
10 concerned about the quality of service that a  
11 newly graduated interpreter can provide. This  
12 is a valid concern.

13 However, the bill is, and its amendments  
14 have the following assurances in place to  
15 protect the consumer: individuals must pass a  
16 knowledge test approved by the office prior to  
17 being provisional registered. The knowledge  
18 test is part of the two-part certification exam  
19 approved by the office.

20 In order to review a provisional  
21 registration, interpreters must participate in  
22 professional development courses and provide  
23 proof to ODHH that demonstrates this commitment  
24 to the field. In certain settings they are

1 required to work with state registered  
2 interpreters. Deaf consumers are empowered to  
3 request a registered interpreter.

4 The amendment expands the complaint  
5 procedures to allow complaints against  
6 individuals holding provisional registration,  
7 and ODHH has the power to maintain records,  
8 revoke provisional registrations, refuse  
9 renewal and provisional registrations and  
10 investigate field complaints.

11 The department supports the amendments to  
12 House Bill 1596 because it will increase the  
13 pool of qualified interpreters in the  
14 Commonwealth. In the long term, it is a  
15 positive outcome for new graduates, the deaf  
16 consumers and the Commonwealth.

17 I want to thank you for the opportunity to  
18 present my comments on House Bill 1596 and the  
19 proposed amendments to the bill.

20 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

21 Do either of the other two have comments?

22 MR. GANNON: No. They don't have formal  
23 presentations.

24 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from members?

1 Yes, Chairman Adolph.

2 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Good morning.

4 MR. GANNON: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you for your  
6 testimony, Mr. Gannon.

7 Just a couple of questions. I guess the  
8 first question is, how many times can an  
9 applicant take the exam under this provisional  
10 registration?

11 MS. BEHUN: The office recognizes the  
12 national certifications, so the testing is  
13 being provided by the registries for the  
14 interpreters of the deaf.

15 So, an applicant can take as many times as  
16 they see fit.

17 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you.

18 How did you come up with the \$100 fee?

19 MS. BEHUN: That is a fee that is listed  
20 in Act 57. And that was prior to before I came  
21 on board.

22 Cathy, could you answer that; do you have  
23 any idea how that came about?

24 MS. WOJCIECHOWSKI: No.

1           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH:   Okay.  Now, how many  
2           licenses do we have statewide?

3           MS. BEHUN:   Currently, there are 252  
4           interpreters.

5           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH:   Sounds like you were  
6           expecting that question.  Okay.  All right.

7           Now, how long does a full registration  
8           last?

9           MS. BEHUN:   It is one year.

10          CHAIRMAN ADOLPH:   Okay.  That's good.

11          MS. BEHUN:   I'm sorry, full registration  
12          is two years.  I apologize.

13          CHAIRMAN ADOLPH:   Okay.  I am trying to  
14          read these questions that our legal analysis  
15          wrote that I should ask.

16          But it only lasts for one year, but the  
17          full registration cost is \$100 for two years,  
18          or is it \$100 for one year?

19          MS. BEHUN:   It is \$100 for two years.  For  
20          the state register, for those who have the  
21          national certification, the provisional  
22          registration is for one year.

23          CHAIRMAN ADOLPH:   So, it costs -- it  
24          either costs \$100, whether it is for one year

1 or up to two years?

2 MS. BEHUN: Correct.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: And something that we  
4 might want to take a look at.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. BEHUN: You're welcome.

7 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other  
8 members?

9 (Whereupon, there was no  
10 response.)

11 CHAIRMAN STURLA: All right. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 MR. GANNON: Thank you again.

14 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Next is Martha Andras,  
15 CI/CT, Freelance Interpreter.

16 MS. ANDRAS: Good morning.

17 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

18 MS. ANDRAS: Now, would you like me to  
19 read my testimony? We were a little bit late,  
20 we got lost, so I missed the very beginning.

21 CHAIRMAN STURLA: You can either read it  
22 or paraphrase it or take whatever time you want  
23 to convey what we need to know.

24 MS. ANDRAS: Okay. Well, thank you for

1 allowing me to be here this morning.

2 And I would just like to highlight some of  
3 the main points. I feel that the amendment, or  
4 the House Bill 1596 is the right thing to do,  
5 because Act 57, although a good law, I am not  
6 against the intent of the law, I feel it left  
7 out some important provisions for newly  
8 graduated interpreters.

9 And by allowing newly graduated  
10 interpreters to provisionally register, that  
11 would give them the opportunity to begin  
12 working in their profession and earn a living,  
13 start paying their college loans, which is what  
14 all of us were able to do before Act 57 was  
15 instituted.

16 I, myself, after graduating from my  
17 Interpreter Training Program, was able to work  
18 in the state of Pennsylvania, in all settings.

19 We do have a code of professional conduct  
20 through RID that we must follow which instructs  
21 us to choose assignments wisely, within our  
22 ability range.

23 And that is what I feel I have done, and,  
24 hopefully, the students that are graduating

1 will be doing the same thing.

2 Some students have left the state because  
3 they are unable to work in Pennsylvania after  
4 graduation. So, they have taken practicums in  
5 other states and have decided to stay in other  
6 states for a job, because their work ability  
7 was so severely restrictive by Act 57. I would  
8 like to see that problem eliminated.

9 I think that is about the highlights.

10 Professor Bentley-Sassaman from Bloomsburg  
11 University, who did submit her testimony and  
12 was unable to be here today, she asked me to  
13 stress the fact that the program at Bloomsburg  
14 University has been entirely rewritten, and for  
15 the first two years of the program, the  
16 students will be taking their ASL classes,  
17 their American Sign Language classes and then  
18 they will need to go through a screening to  
19 even be accepted into the Interpreter Training  
20 Program, which is something new.

21 So, she wanted me to stress that the  
22 standards for future interpreters are going to  
23 be even stricter, because they will have to  
24 pass through this screening before they are



1 even allowed to continue their education in the  
2 interpreter program.

3 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay.

4 MS. ANDRAS: That is about it.

5 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from members;  
6 Representative Adolph.

7 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: A quick question.

8 MS. ANDRAS: Sure.

9 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: The prior testifier said  
10 that there was 252 licensees in the  
11 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. By passing a  
12 provisional registration, do you feel that will  
13 increase the number of licensees eventually  
14 down the road?

15 MS. ANDRAS: Absolutely, because the  
16 provisional registration is a limited time  
17 period, and in order to even be provisionally  
18 registered, there are certain criteria that the  
19 students must satisfy with the ultimate goal of  
20 becoming a fully certified interpreter. And  
21 once they achieve that status, national  
22 certification, they will be able to state  
23 register and won't have to use the provisional  
24 any longer.

1           So, I do believe it will increase the pool  
2           of available interpreters.

3           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: 252 is not an awful lot  
4           of individuals.

5           MS. ANDRAS: No. No. There is a  
6           nationwide shortage of interpreters.

7           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much.

8           MS. ANDRAS: You're welcome.

9           CHAIRMAN STURLA: I noticed that you were  
10          saying the testimony, for the record, would be  
11          no benefit to you, House Bill 1596.

12          MS. ANDRAS: That's correct.

13          CHAIRMAN STURLA: And there is a pretty  
14          good indication that we have people who are  
15          asking for more to come into their profession  
16          and compete with them, and you might have some  
17          neutral language here.

18          MS. ANDRAS: Thank you.

19          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Any other questions from  
20          members?

21                                 (Whereupon, there was no  
22                                 response.)

23          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you for your  
24          comments.

1 MS. ANDRAS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Next we have a panel  
3 from the Pennsylvania Registry of Interpreters  
4 for the Deaf, Cindy Brown, President and Nicole  
5 Wade, Board Member.

6 MS. BROWN: Good morning, my name is Cindi  
7 Brown, I am the president of the Pennsylvania  
8 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and I  
9 have with me Nicole Wade.

10 And first we would like to thank you for  
11 inviting us to present comments today.

12 The Pennsylvania Registry of Interpreters  
13 for the Deaf strongly support a provisional  
14 registration for sign language interpreters and  
15 transliterators.

16 The current lack of a provisional  
17 registration has created a black market of sign  
18 language interpreters in Pennsylvania. A  
19 provisional registration would bring novice  
20 interpreters out into the open and recognize  
21 them as an emerging professionals in the field.  
22 It is imperative that novice interpreters and  
23 transliterators be given the opportunity to  
24 legally gain from practical field experience

1 while preparing for interpreting field exams.

2 However, it is also equally important that  
3 the provisional registration does not, in any  
4 way, cause harm to the deaf or hard of hearing  
5 citizens in the Commonwealth.

6 With both of these ideas in mind, the  
7 Pennsylvania Registry of Interpreters for the  
8 Deaf offers the following comments and  
9 recommendations to improve the Sign Language  
10 Interpreter and Transliterator State  
11 Registration Act of 2004.

12 Now, I am going to go through the portions  
13 of the bill that PARID supports as they are.

14 On Page 2, line 31 through 40, these lines  
15 reference the individuals who are working in  
16 their practicum while students. And this  
17 amendment, as proposed, would permit the  
18 students who are doing their internship or  
19 practicum, the opportunity to gain some limited  
20 experience in both the medical and mental  
21 health settings while still protecting the  
22 integrity of the communications that is  
23 occurring.

24 So, for these reasons, PARID agrees that

1       these proposed changes should be accepted.

2             On Page 2, line 43 through 47 of the bill,  
3       these lines detail an exception to the original  
4       law that was passed in 2004. This exception  
5       permits a physician's office to hire anyone to  
6       provide services as a sign language  
7       interpreter.

8             This interpreter who is possibly  
9       uncredentialed or unqualified is provided, and  
10       neither the deaf or hard of hearing patients,  
11       nor the medical staff have any assurance that  
12       the interpreter is conveying the information  
13       accurately.

14            The medical setting, even in a physician's  
15       office, often presents complex linguistic  
16       features in both the American Sign Language and  
17       English. There are also very serious  
18       consequences for misinterpreting an  
19       instruction, a symptom, or portions of a  
20       patient's medical history.

21            The current exception number five of the  
22       original law passed in 2004, already provides a  
23       mechanism for a deaf or hard of hearing  
24       individual to request the interpreting services

1 of a person who is not registered under this  
2 law. Therefore, to have exception number eight  
3 is redundant and unnecessary.

4 For these reasons, PARID agrees at Page 2,  
5 line 43 through 47 should be deleted from the  
6 law as it is proposed.

7 On Page 3, lines 2 through 6, these lines  
8 detail the time limit for individuals who apply  
9 for a provisional registration. The process of  
10 interpreting is a learned skill that takes  
11 several years to fully develop and requires  
12 continued use to maintain.

13 This five-year time limit for application  
14 will help to ensure the individuals who apply  
15 for the provisional registration are current in  
16 the field.

17 PARID does support the five-year time  
18 limit for a recent graduate of an Interpreter  
19 Education Program to apply for their  
20 provisional registration.

21 On Page 3, line 32 through 35, these lines  
22 detail the settings where provisionally  
23 registered interpreters are not permitted to  
24 work. The mental health and legal settings

1       often deal with a person's life or liberty.  
2       For that reason, PARID agrees that  
3       provisionally registered interpreters should  
4       not be permitted to work in the legal setting  
5       at all, or in the mental health setting unless  
6       they are accompanied by a qualified interpreter  
7       or transliterator.

8               On Page 3, line 47 through 48 details that  
9       the office may approve only two consecutive  
10       renewals.

11              An individual who is diligently working  
12       toward his or her certification can earn it in  
13       three years. PARID supports this provisional  
14       registration renewal limit.

15              Next, we move on to the changes that PARID  
16       strongly encourages the Committee to make.

17              On Page 2, line 47 through 48, in this  
18       exception or in this bill, this particular  
19       exception number nine that allows for  
20       provisional registration does not have any  
21       requirements for the interpreter who has a  
22       provisional registration to inform the clients,  
23       deaf or hard of hearing or those who can hear,  
24       that the interpreter has a provisional

1 registration.

2 Deaf and hard of hearing people should be  
3 fully informed that the interpreter who is  
4 providing the services for them holds a  
5 provisional registration and not a state  
6 registration.

7 PARID recommends that the phrase, "An  
8 individual who obtains a provisional  
9 registration under Section 5.1," be changed to,  
10 an individual who obtains a provisional  
11 registration under Section 5.1, if the  
12 individual informs the deaf or hard of hearing  
13 client that the individual holds a provisional  
14 registration.

15 And on Page 3, line 36 through 42, these  
16 lines allow for provisionally registered  
17 interpreter to work in the medical settings  
18 completely unsupervised.

19 The medical settings, even in the  
20 physician's office, often presents complex  
21 linguistic features in both American Sign  
22 Language and English.

23 There are also very serious consequences  
24 for misinterpreting an instruction, a symptom



1 or portions of the patient's medical history.

2 Provisionally registered interpreters have  
3 not yet passed an interpreting skills exam that  
4 has been approved by the office. They have  
5 only passed a written knowledge exam.

6 For these reasons, PARID recommends that  
7 provisionally registered interpreters not be  
8 permitted to interpret in medical settings  
9 unless they're accompanied by a qualified sign  
10 language interpreter or qualified  
11 transliterator.

12 PARID does propose the following two  
13 options: To replace Page 3, line 36 through  
14 42.

15 Option number one, PARID recommends that  
16 the word "medical" be inserted at the beginning  
17 of Page 3, line 33. The line would read, point  
18 ii, a medical or mental health setting, unless  
19 accompanied by a qualified sign language  
20 interpreter or transliterator.

21 And, also, Page 3, line 36 through 42  
22 should be deleted. This option provides the  
23 most protection for the deaf and hard of  
24 hearing patients and the medical professionals

1 who are serving you.

2 Option number two that PARID proposes is  
3 that Page 3, line 36 through 42 be changed to  
4 the following, still have point iii, a medical  
5 setting unless provisionally registered  
6 interpreter meets one of the following  
7 criteria.

8 Point A would be that they are accompanied  
9 by a qualified sign language interpreter or  
10 transliterator and point B would be that the  
11 provisionally registered interpreter has  
12 renewed their provisional registration and the  
13 patient is informed that the individual engaged  
14 in interpreting or transliterator has obtained  
15 a provisional registration, is not state  
16 registered under this act and that the patient  
17 has the right to be provided, upon request, a  
18 qualified sign language interpreter or  
19 qualified transliterator.

20 This change would require that a  
21 provisionally registered interpreter working  
22 during their first year of a provisional  
23 registration would be accompanied by a  
24 qualified sign language interpreter or

1 transliterator. And then in subsequent renewal  
2 years, the provisional registered interpreter  
3 would be permitted to work unaccompanied by the  
4 deaf or hard of hearing patient as long as the  
5 deaf or hard of hearing patient agrees to it.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

8 Questions from members? Representative  
9 Saylor.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: I don't know,  
11 Mr. Chair, I really want to ask Miss Andras  
12 about the kind of -- I don't want these  
13 testifiers to get short changed.

14 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Sure. As long as she is  
15 okay with that.

16 MS. ANDRAS: I am okay with that.

17 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Miss Andras, I  
18 guess my question to you is, you are an  
19 interpreter?

20 MS. ANDRAS: Yes.

21 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: And have you had a  
22 chance to see the recommendations being made  
23 here?

24 MS. ANDRAS: No. This is the first time

1 I've seen this.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: So, you haven't  
3 had a chance to look it over?

4 MS. ANDRAS: No. Just now, but you can  
5 ask me a question.

6 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Well, what I would  
7 like to know is, what do you think of the  
8 changes that is being proposed or the language  
9 bill as is?

10 MS. ANDRAS: Are you referring to option  
11 one or option two?

12 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: That and the rest  
13 of the changes recommended.

14 MS. ANDRAS: Okay. I would have to review  
15 it, but if I could have a few minutes --

16 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Yes.

17 MS. ANDRAS: -- but, option one and option  
18 two, I can pretty well tell you, I don't think  
19 it is necessary. The students will have  
20 completed a practicum.

21 As I said in my statement, they follow a  
22 Code of Professional Conduct that guides them  
23 as to what assignments they should be taking.  
24 And if they feel an assignment is out of their

1 league, they should not technically and  
2 professionally, should not accept it.

3 Interpreting in medical situations without  
4 being certified is nothing that none of us here  
5 haven't done.

6 So, I don't think that it is necessary.

7 Plus --

8 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Excuse me, Ma'am, could  
9 you speak into the mic.

10 MS. ANDRAS: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

11 Plus, I wanted to say, Act 57, I believe,  
12 in exception number two, allows for a medical  
13 situation, should it become an emergency, that  
14 interpreter would be allowed to interpret  
15 anyway, because if an individual -- I will just  
16 read it.

17 "An individual engaged in sign language  
18 interpreting or transliterating during an  
19 emergency, this is a non-registered  
20 interpreter, is allowed to interpret when a  
21 delay in obtaining a state registered  
22 interpreter or state registered transliterator  
23 might lead to injury or loss to the individual  
24 requiring the services."

1           So, I am interpreting that as saying, if a  
2 non-registered or a provisionally registered  
3 interpreter is working in a situation and it  
4 would become an emergency, they are allowed to  
5 interpret until a state registered interpreter  
6 can be obtained.

7           So, the original Act 57, I believe, covers  
8 that and, I believe, this other language is  
9 unnecessary.

10           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Okay. It might  
11 have been said earlier, how many interpreters  
12 are registered right now?

13           MS. ANDRAS: 252.

14           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: 252.

15           MS. ANDRAS: And, plus, another reason I  
16 feel that would be restrictive is due to rural  
17 settings.

18           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: That is my  
19 concern. I know 252 is not a lot --

20           MS. ANDRAS: No.

21           REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: -- based on  
22 numbers of people who are deaf in our state.  
23 And my concern would be in rural areas.

24           We are South Central Pennsylvania. I

1       would be concerned how many people are  
2       available with the number of hospitals that we  
3       have in the area, doctors that they have or  
4       outpatient clinics that we now have rather than  
5       them going to the hospital.

6                So, I was just curious and I would  
7       appreciate that.

8                MS. ANDRAS: That would be my opinion.

9                And one more comment I would like to make.  
10       I can't -- we have a hard enough time sometimes  
11       getting doctor's offices or hospitals to pay  
12       for one interpreter, I doubt very seriously  
13       they are going to pay for two. And I don't  
14       know of many, if any, that would be willing to  
15       give up their time to go and just supervise  
16       someone.

17               REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: As a legislator, I  
18       found that you're possible to come there if it  
19       is life support.

20               In some cases -- I have never had a case  
21       with the deaf, but I have seen for people who  
22       speak different languages, and it was very  
23       difficult there to get interpreters on the  
24       scene to interpret.

1           And I guess that my concern is, I want to  
2           protect the safety of these patients, but at  
3           the same time, something is better than  
4           nothing. Or the quickest action possible.

5           I want to make sure that we are not  
6           limiting the number of people who may be  
7           available to the emergency scene.

8           MS. ANDRAS: Right. And the original act,  
9           I believe, allows for that.

10          REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Thank you very  
11          much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other --

13          MS. BEHUN: Mr. Chairman, can I respond?

14          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Yes. Sure. Absolutely.

15          MS. WADE: I am not sure the panel knows  
16          that both Cindi and I are certified registered  
17          interpreters in the state. We both have  
18          graduated from Interpreting Training Programs  
19          in the state, two different programs, and work  
20          as interpreters full time.

21          The one reason, and I will speak to what  
22          Marty said about the medical situation. Right  
23          now the way the bill has been, at least for the  
24          last several years is that, in practicum,



1 students who are doing their internship, cannot  
2 actually practice in a medical setting.

3 So, you have these new students coming out  
4 that actually have no experience in a doctor's  
5 office, in a hospital, in medical situations.  
6 If they did go, they actually can't practice;  
7 they can't do the actual job.

8 So, they may have gone and actually seen  
9 what a doctor's office looks like, but has no  
10 real experience in that setting and we are  
11 going to now tell them that they can do it on  
12 their own.

13 A medical setting is someone's life. If  
14 you -- you are handling their medications, very  
15 sensitive information and it would be a concern  
16 to us that there is no way to make sure that  
17 that information -- and there is no tests prior  
18 to this that say, yes, they can do this.

19 So, we feel that at least for one year it  
20 gives them the chance to gain that experience  
21 and then they will be able to do that  
22 assignment or that job.

23 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: I guess my concern  
24 is, and I understand what you are trying to do,

1 and I think it is good; what you are trying to  
2 reach is good. The problem that I have, I  
3 guess, is having lived and dealt with hospitals  
4 in the city of York, is just seeing the  
5 shortage of people, not only in -- most of my  
6 experience of an interpreter is of Spanish or  
7 Asian orient, but even in your area, my concern  
8 is emergencies.

9 It is not -- you are saying, well,  
10 somebody who gets paid by the hospital and is  
11 on staff has to have those requirements, that  
12 is one thing. But if you are talking about,  
13 bring an interpreter into a medical office in  
14 an emergency up in Williamsport area and  
15 throughout the Mansfield area, they have  
16 nurses, basically, and they have a problem  
17 getting nurses, let alone doctors, and my  
18 concern would be, again, if you put this  
19 requirement in, I'm just real concerned that  
20 these people's needs will not be met. It is a  
21 nice thing if you want to accomplish, and I  
22 agree with the goal. My concern is, in the  
23 end, you may hamper the treatment of the people  
24 in York. Or put somebody that may choose to go

1 and try to help at a liability risk, not that  
2 they may already be, but even more, now,  
3 because they will have to help save somebody's  
4 life. They are not what you are suggesting  
5 they should be.

6 And, so, now, the hospital and -- they are  
7 not going to take that risk. And I think that  
8 communication or whatever, even the minimal  
9 communication is better than none at all.

10 MS. BROWN: And if I can respond to that.  
11 The -- Act 57, the original law, has exception  
12 number two that does permit anybody to  
13 interpret in an emergency.

14 So, we are not removing that exception, we  
15 are still allowing that to be in there. We are  
16 just saying that, if this is a scheduled  
17 medical appointment, that the interpreter  
18 should be registered.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: But what about  
20 individuals in the Mansfield or Williamsport or  
21 areas in our state where they can't get nurses,  
22 they are paying bonuses to get nurses in those  
23 parts of Pennsylvania. There is already a  
24 shortage of nurses everywhere, but in those

1 parts more, and I guess, again, it goes back to  
2 the fact, good goals, but in the end, we are  
3 defeating what Representative Eachus is trying  
4 to achieve, is to make sure people have the  
5 ability to have skills if that is available.  
6 You are going to that next step. I think that  
7 next step puts us at risk, because it is now  
8 getting too tight, and you may end up limiting  
9 the number of people that is available to serve  
10 the healthcare community.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other --  
13 Representative Stevenson.

14 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 I would just like to follow that line of  
17 questioning just briefly and I would like to  
18 hear from both groups here.

19 I am wondering about the medical concern  
20 here, and there are two parts to this question.  
21 One is, is it the terminology that is difficult  
22 to interpret if you haven't been in that  
23 situation before; is that what the concern is?

24 And the second part of it is, is it worth

1 the liability associated with, perhaps,  
2 interpreting it incorrectly, and is that a  
3 valid concern?

4 MS. WADE: We actually believe it is a  
5 valid concern. And we were talking about this,  
6 trying to find a way to make it as clear as  
7 possible what we are to do.

8 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Which is the  
9 valid concern?

10 MS. WADE: The language itself. It is --  
11 ASL is a recognized language and has its own  
12 grammar and syntax. And they don't always  
13 match. English and ASL don't always match the  
14 same way.

15 So, we take something as simply as, take  
16 your medicine. To take your medicine in ASL is  
17 not that simple. You have everything from  
18 take; take a pill; take it in a spoon form;  
19 take it in a small cup; take it from a liquid  
20 dropper for a child; take it as an injection in  
21 your arm and/or where the doctor requires you  
22 to take it.

23 And if that -- often the injection -- or  
24 even in a hospital, if you are taking morphine

1 drip, you take your medicine. Every one of  
2 that "take" is a different way of saying  
3 something.

4 So, if I tell you to take your medicine as  
5 a pill, but really you were supposed to put it  
6 on your tongue and leave it there and I told  
7 you to take the pill, I am interpreting it and  
8 you follow my direction and not the doctor's.  
9 The issue there is the equivalency in the  
10 language.

11 If you have not had the experience -- some  
12 person may have that experience already coming  
13 in, but as an average student coming out of  
14 college, he may not have that experience to  
15 know those intricate linguistic differences and  
16 to be able to take that and make sure that it  
17 is going to be conveyed correctly.

18 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: And, now, if I  
19 could hear from Miss Andras.

20 MS. ANDRAS: Sure. What Nichole says is  
21 true. However, the group of students that we  
22 are talking about that have not practiced  
23 medical interpreting on their practicum, is  
24 only one or two years worth since Act 57. All

1 students previous to that were able to do  
2 medical interpreting on their practicum.

3 So, they have experience. And I am  
4 focusing not only on students that have  
5 graduated last year or that will graduate this  
6 year, I am focusing on a group of students that  
7 have graduated, maybe, two to three, even up to  
8 four or five years ago, that have already  
9 passed the written test, that are out working  
10 in the field, that have done medical  
11 interpreting on their practicum. They are good  
12 interpreters; they just can't work.

13 So, yes, to a point that I would agree  
14 with Nichole. I also would like to say that,  
15 even though Act 57 restricted students from  
16 interpreting medical situations, many students  
17 did interpret medical situations on their  
18 practicum, with the permission of the deaf  
19 client. So they do have experience.

20 And I disagree. I respectfully disagree.

21 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: If they  
22 legalize, the liability comes back on the  
23 interpreter?

24 MS. ANDRAS: Yes. And we are required to

1 carry liability insurance.

2 MS. BROWN: Interpreters are not required  
3 to have liability insurance, it is their own  
4 individual choice, whether they have liability  
5 insurance or not. But there is liability  
6 insurance that is available to interpreters.

7 MS. ANDRAS: Well, if I could clarify  
8 that. That is true, they are not required by  
9 any state law, but the way we work as self  
10 contractors, I, personally, work for twelve  
11 different agencies. Every single one of them  
12 requires me to have liability insurance.

13 So, the students that graduate and that  
14 will be applying for jobs through agencies,  
15 number one, most agencies give you a screening  
16 anyway before they hire you; and number two,  
17 liability insurance is a requirement to work  
18 for every agency that I work for.

19 MS. BROWN: I just want to add, this is  
20 actually going back to Representative Saylor's  
21 point about the rural areas.

22 The interpreters in those rural areas are  
23 not served by interpreter referral agencies,  
24 they are served mostly by independent contract



1 interpreters who are contracting with the  
2 hospitals, doctors offices and other businesses  
3 directly.

4 So, they would not be covered under the  
5 requirements from a referral agency to have  
6 liability insurance.

7 REPRESENTATIVE STEVENSON: Thank you very  
8 much for your response and thank you,  
9 Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Questions from other  
11 members? Representative Adolph.

12 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 I guess this question is directed at Cindi  
14 Brown.

15 Cindi, in your testimony you used the  
16 terminology black market.

17 MS. BROWN: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Black market to me  
19 means, that someone is doing something illegal.

20 MS. BROWN: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Could you explain  
22 that to us?

23 MS. BROWN: Yes. Exception number five,  
24 in the original law allows for a deaf

1 individual to request an interpreter who is not  
2 registered to work for them. That has been  
3 changed in practice, and what is happening,  
4 there are interpreter referral agencies who  
5 will send an interpreter who is not registered  
6 with a, what they call a waiver form, and they  
7 arrive on site and they tell the deaf person,  
8 sign this form and I will interpret for you.  
9 Or, if you don't sign the form, I will leave  
10 and you don't get an interpreter. Which is not  
11 at all what the intent of that exception was.

12 The intent of the exception was, that the  
13 deaf individual has the right to request  
14 somebody to interpret for them, should they  
15 want this particular person who is not  
16 registered.

17 So, there are interpreters out there who  
18 are not registered, who walk around with these  
19 forms saying, sign this form and I will  
20 interpret for you.

21 So, what is happening is illegal, and that  
22 is why we call it a black market.

23 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Would having a  
24 provisional registration help improve this

1 situation?

2 MS. BROWN: Yes, it would.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Thank you.

5 Now, if I could, I am assuming that that  
6 exception for being able to request someone who  
7 is not licensed is basically so that you can  
8 have a family member interpret for you, it  
9 really serves a convenience and someone that  
10 you have a comfort level with, not what you are  
11 saying, someone that comes out that you have  
12 never met before and say, yeah, sure, I want  
13 them.

14 MS. BROWN: Correct.

15 MS. ANDRAS: May I make one more comment?

16 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Yes.

17 MS. ANDRAS: The new language in -- it is  
18 under B, registration, triple I, it is  
19 requiring the provisionally registered  
20 interpreter to inform the patient that they are  
21 provisionally registered.

22 So, there is an allowance for that.

23 CHAIRMAN STURLA: Okay. Any other  
24 questions from other members?

1                   (Whereupon, there was no  
2                   response.)

3           CHAIRMAN STURLA: All right. Thank you.

4           Next on the agenda is Tom King, President  
5 of the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement  
6 of the Deaf.

7           UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Excuse me, but the  
8 interpreter needs a break because there is only  
9 one interpreter who is working.

10          CHAIRMAN STURLA: Yes, we can. And I will  
11 also point out that, because I have an  
12 appointment back in my district, I will need to  
13 leave, but Chairman Adolph will be heading the  
14 Committee when we get to our second half here.

15          UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Thank you very much.

16                   (Whereupon, a brief recess was  
17                   taken.)

18          CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. If everybody will  
19 have a seat and we can continue with the  
20 hearings.

21          As Chairman Sturla said, the next  
22 testifier is Tom King. Tom is the president  
23 for the Pennsylvania Society for the  
24 Advancement of the Deaf.

1           Good afternoon, Tom.

2                   (Whereupon, the following  
3                   testimony was interpreted by  
4                   Adele Wiggins for Tom King.)

5           MR. KING: Good afternoon -- or good  
6 morning, really.

7           I would like to thank the Committee for  
8 inviting me to testify and thank the  
9 chairperson, Chairman Sturla and Committee  
10 Members.

11           The Pennsylvania Advanced -- Society for  
12 the Advancement for the Deaf partially supports  
13 the amendment to the House Bill 1596. We are  
14 very pleased with the numerous changes made  
15 that have taken care of the concerns of what  
16 Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the  
17 Deaf had, PSAD.

18           And we do support the renewal time frame  
19 for a provisional registration, which is to  
20 limit up to three years. And we would like to  
21 see this remain in the amendment.

22           The following are our suggestions or  
23 additions to the amendment. PSAD supports the  
24 language on Page 3, lines 32 to 34, related to

1        mental health settings, that a provisional  
2        interpreter may provide services as long as  
3        they are accompanied by a registered  
4        interpreter.

5            However, we would like to see the word  
6        "medical" added. PSAD noted the addition of  
7        iii on Page 3, line 36 to 42. This is a  
8        loophole actually being provided that causes  
9        concerns. It stated, "Unless the patient is  
10       informed."

11           This suggests that the patient does not  
12        need to be informed. PSAD prefers that the  
13        patient be informed if the provisional  
14        interpreters are being utilized, unless they  
15        prefer certified interpreters.

16           PSAD appreciates the definition as stated  
17        for, "Qualified sign language interpreter," and  
18        "qualified transliterator," that clearly state,  
19        "an individual who is state registered," as  
20        stated on Page 1, lines 31 through 36. This is  
21        very important and clearly defined. It is  
22        important to allow the office, which is the  
23        Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to  
24        have the discretion to establish other

1 criteria, as needed, to comply with the  
2 regulation.

3 Also, we would like to see the language be  
4 changed on Page 3, lines 6 and 7 to prove that  
5 the applicant has passed the written  
6 examination approved by the Office of the Deaf  
7 and the Hard of Hearing.

8 PSAD feels that two continuing education  
9 credits as stated on Page 3, line 38, be  
10 changed to 20 hours of continuous professional  
11 development.

12 PSAD strongly encourages adopting Section  
13 9 for suspension, denial, nonrenewal or  
14 revocation of state registration or provisional  
15 registration as read in the amendment.

16 PSAD would like to see legislative  
17 language be added to insist that provisional  
18 sign language interpreters must identify  
19 themselves as a provisional interpreter, to  
20 accomplish this, by having ODHH issue photo  
21 identification badges to be used in all  
22 settings. Deaf and hard of hearing of  
23 Pennsylvania are strongly visually oriented  
24 people.

1           These badges must include the title of  
2           either provisional or certified/registered sign  
3           language interpreter.

4           PSAD is concerned when a provisional sign  
5           language interpreter is making mistakes on  
6           assignment, unless accompanied by a certified  
7           sign language interpreter to give a critique  
8           after that assignment and that should be  
9           temporarily suspended until they pass the  
10          national test.

11          There is a need for increasing funding for  
12          the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.  
13          There has been no budgetary increases for 20  
14          years, despite increases in cost of living as  
15          well as increases in demand for services from  
16          ODHH. If they are asked to assume more  
17          responsibility and authority to monitor various  
18          circumstances affecting the quality of life of  
19          this Commonwealth's deaf and hard of hearing  
20          population, then funding needs to be allocated  
21          to do the job. Otherwise, who will enforce the  
22          regulations, work with establishments to  
23          improve interpreting services, maintain the  
24          list of certified interpreters and the ever



1 growing list of things that need to be done to  
2 ensure the functional equivalency and access of  
3 the deaf and hard of hearing citizens of this  
4 Commonwealth.

5 And one thing additionally I would like to  
6 tell you, is that my organization number has  
7 2800 deaf and hard of hearing members of  
8 Pennsylvania.

9 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you for  
10 your testimony.

11 Are there any members that have questions  
12 for Mr. King?

13 (Whereupon, there was no  
14 response.)

15 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I just want to make one  
16 statement that has just been brought to my  
17 attention by staff. In your testimony on Page  
18 1, your last sentence on Page 1, "feels that  
19 the two continuing education credits as stated  
20 on Page 3, line 38, be changed to 20 hours of  
21 professional development."

22 It has been brought to my attention that  
23 that appeared in the old amendment and does not  
24 appear in the new amendment.

1           MR. KING: Okay. Fine. Then I would like  
2 to see that in there somehow.

3           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you,  
4 Mr. King.

5           MS. TREMMEL: Before you go, I have two  
6 questions. I would ask, how many people in  
7 Pennsylvania, approximately, are deaf or hard  
8 of hearing?

9           MR. KING: Well, it is a mathematical  
10 calculation, I don't know exactly, but possibly  
11 -- roughly, I would say, 2500, possibly. There  
12 is no exact statistics to be proved.

13          MS. TREMMEL: Thank you.

14          And if there is somebody here from L&I who  
15 could answer questions?

16          We were told earlier that there are  
17 regulations in process dealing with the name  
18 tags that would help identify people.

19          CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Could you identify  
20 yourself for the record, please?

21          MS. BEHUN: Sure. Sharon Behun, Director  
22 of the Pennsylvania Office of the Deaf and Hard  
23 of Hearing.

24          ODHH is working on the -- to have some

1 type of identification cards for all  
2 interpreters, whether they are provisional  
3 register or a qualified registered interpreter.  
4 The details have not been worked out yet, but  
5 we are currently working on that.

6 And they also address your attention  
7 regarding to statistics, I don't have them with  
8 me, but I can get that information and I can  
9 forward that information to you.  
10 Unfortunately, Pennsylvania hasn't done the  
11 census since the 1970s, when they collected  
12 that information.

13 So, everything since then has been by  
14 statistician has been to the point where they  
15 have tried to come up with the numbers. And I  
16 will try to give you something off the top of  
17 my head, but I can forward that information.

18 MS. TREMMEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much,  
20 Mr. King.

21 At this time, I would like to acknowledge  
22 the presence of Committee Members,  
23 Representative Ron Waters of Philadelphia  
24 County and Representative Wansacz.

1           Our next testifier is Lauren Lewis.

2           Lauren is the senior interpreting student from  
3           Bloomsburg University.

4           Good morning, Lauren, welcome to  
5           Philadelphia.

6           MS. LEWIS: Good morning. Thank you.

7           As you said, my name is Lauren Lewis and I  
8           am a senior in the interpreting program at  
9           Bloomsburg University. And I really appreciate  
10          you giving me this opportunity to speak on my  
11          behalf, as well as the behalf of the other  
12          students in the interpreting program.

13          Right now, we are all seniors and we will  
14          be graduating this year. So, Act 57, as well  
15          as House Bill 1596 will directly affect all of  
16          us. It will directly affect all of us and,  
17          really, already has affected us.

18          Before I describe how it has affected us  
19          already, I would like to say that I do agree  
20          that members of the deaf community should be  
21          given quality services through qualified  
22          interpreters. I think that is very important,  
23          they do deserve that. But at the same time,  
24          going from, not having any type of regulations

1 to going to Act 57 is two different extremes.  
2 And I think it is really limiting what we can  
3 do and it is actually forcing us out of  
4 Pennsylvania.

5 When we first learned about Act 57 two  
6 years ago, immediately some people transferred  
7 to interpreting programs in other states, and  
8 it made all of us realize that we are going to  
9 have to leave the state of Pennsylvania if we  
10 want to find work.

11 So, for myself, I, at that point, didn't  
12 even consider Pennsylvania as a place to do my  
13 practicum and to work in the future. I have  
14 applied to an agency in Florida for my  
15 practicum.

16 And I would also like to speak on the  
17 behalf of one of my classmates who is a  
18 non-traditional student. She has a family  
19 already and she is established in Pennsylvania  
20 and for her, she almost completely quit the  
21 program, because having something established,  
22 here, already, it is going to be hard for her  
23 to move to a different state just so she can  
24 gain experience in the interpreting field and

1 start working. It is not possible for her to  
2 volunteer, which Act 57 does allow.

3 You know, how would she continue to  
4 support her family and it doesn't really allow  
5 for us to have members of the deaf community  
6 request us, because we are not known, yet, in  
7 that field as new interpreters.

8 So, those are points that I wanted to  
9 make.

10 We already have a shortage in  
11 Pennsylvania, it has already been brought to  
12 your attention. And I think keeping Act 57 the  
13 way it is, is just going to make this problem  
14 worse. And I think that if House Bill 1596 is  
15 passed, that will encourage more people to stay  
16 in Pennsylvania and, hopefully, that shortage  
17 will decrease.

18 And I would like to empathize that our  
19 program at Bloomsburg is a four-year program.  
20 We do a lot of training, we review the RID Code  
21 of Professional Conduct every year over and  
22 over and over again.

23 And, I think, after graduating from the  
24 four-year program, we deserve the same chance

1       that other interpreters were given after they  
2       completed whatever kind of training they did.  
3       We have to start somewhere. And I think based  
4       on the education and training that we've  
5       already had, I think that we are ready to start  
6       as new interpreters in the field without having  
7       to be certified right away.

8             And I just like to make an analogy. We  
9       rely on hands-on-experience just like with  
10      other languages. If you want to learn Spanish,  
11      you should go to Spain, that is where you learn  
12      it best. For us, yes, we've done the  
13      educational background on interpreting, but for  
14      us, we are not going to become skilled until we  
15      can do that hands-on-experience.

16            So, telling us that we have to be  
17      immediately certified and we having to go out  
18      of state to get that experience is really  
19      setting limits on us.

20            And I, kind of, wanted to mention about  
21      the medical interpreting situation for  
22      provisional interpreters. If I can refer back  
23      to that, it does -- maybe I misunderstand when  
24      things will be put into effect, but in Cindi

1 Brown's testimony, talking about the portions  
2 of the bill that PARID does support, the Page  
3 2, lines 31 to 40, it does say that, if this  
4 amendment is passed, students will be allowed  
5 to gain limited experience in both the medical  
6 and mental health setting, and we will have at  
7 that point during our practicum, we are with a  
8 mentor.

9 So, I am sure if they, you know -- goes  
10 into effect before or after, but if we do --  
11 are allowed to do this for our practicum and we  
12 do gain experience in that medical setting,  
13 then I guess that I am not really sure why we  
14 still need to be supervised after we've  
15 completed our practicum. I think that by that  
16 point, even if it is limited to just  
17 observation, we are still observing what the  
18 certified is doing right and how they're  
19 handling the situation, plus we might get some  
20 hands-on-experience.

21 So, if we get to do that during our  
22 practicum, I don't think that it is necessary  
23 to, again, once we graduate, to have to have a  
24 supervisor with us.



1           In addition to that, we do empathize the  
2           Code of Professional Conduct, like I said, in  
3           our training. And we know that we are not  
4           supposed to take jobs that we don't feel that  
5           we can effectively do.

6           So, we wouldn't go ahead with a medical  
7           interpreting job that we know is over our head,  
8           we would leave that to interpreters that are  
9           skilled in that circumstance.

10          And I would like to refer to the example  
11          that we talked about with, taking your pill and  
12          how many different ways you can take that.  
13          That concept of one word meaning many different  
14          things isn't just in medical settings, that is  
15          in every situation that you could possibly  
16          think of. The word run could be a running  
17          nose, running a race. It has so many different  
18          contexts.

19          So, we already understand that we have to  
20          show it the right way. So we would apply that  
21          to medical settings and we would understand  
22          that we have to show it the right way for them.

23          In addition -- rather, if I could compare  
24          two things. If I was interpreting, standing on

1 a stage for a speaker, that doesn't really give  
2 me a lot of opportunity to stop the speaker if  
3 I had a question or if the member of the deaf  
4 community had a question. But in a medical  
5 setting, I feel as though those are a safer  
6 environment where it is a more intimate  
7 environment that, if I don't think that I am  
8 understanding what the doctor is saying or I  
9 don't know that medical term or I don't know  
10 how to sign it, I have the opportunity to ask  
11 the doctor to clarify or the deaf person can  
12 ask the doctor to clarify.

13 So, I think it is a safe setting for us,  
14 even as provisional interpreters to work in.  
15 And like I said before, we need to start  
16 somewhere. And I think -- I don't think  
17 letting us go ahead with it right away is  
18 necessarily a negative thing.

19 And I think that is all I have for now,  
20 unless there is any questions that you might  
21 have.

22 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you,  
23 Lauren, for your testimony.

24 Any members have questions of Lauren?

1 I just have one question.

2 MS. LEWIS: Sure.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: In your four years of  
4 education at Bloomsburg, how much of that  
5 training is in the medical field in  
6 terminology?

7 MS. LEWIS: The four years that I have  
8 gone through, it is hard to say, because we had  
9 -- our program has had a lot of change over  
10 with teachers and everything.

11 But even though we've had some problems in  
12 the interpreting program, so far -- not  
13 problems, but some changes, we still have  
14 talked about medical interpreting a couple of  
15 times in class, we also -- sometimes -- we are  
16 planning this semester, bringing in an  
17 interpreter to do a workshop on medical  
18 interpreting to give us some knowledge of it.

19 And I know that -- I am pretty sure for in  
20 the future, the program is being rebuilt and I  
21 think medical interpreting is somewhere in  
22 there, you know, in the classes. They do talk  
23 about it.

24 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: What type of salary

1 range does an interpreter coming out of college

2 --

3 MS. LEWIS: Someone else might be able to  
4 answer that better, but I believe -- I think  
5 coming out of college we start around 25 to \$30  
6 an hour. So, annually, I am not sure how much  
7 that comes out to. But that is where we start.

8 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Now, you are sure  
9 it is not the weather that is moving you to  
10 Florida, and not the --

11 MS. LEWIS: Well, I don't want to admit  
12 that it kind of had something to do with it.

13 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: -- after spending four  
14 years at Bloomsburg and the harsh weather?

15 Okay. Thank you very much for your  
16 testimony.

17 MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Representative Wansacz  
19 has a question.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: I am just trying  
21 to understand. Please clarify, you said you  
22 have to -- you are going to Florida because you  
23 cannot practice here in Pennsylvania?

24 MS. LEWIS: Right.

1           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: And that is the  
2 case for every student, they have to go to a  
3 different state in order to graduate; is that  
4 what it is?

5           MS. LEWIS: Some other states are  
6 following Pennsylvania in that they are  
7 building other guidelines that you have to be  
8 registered with a certain organization or  
9 certified. But Pennsylvania is one of them,  
10 and Florida, right now, does not have any  
11 regulations like that as well as many other  
12 states don't.

13           So, a lot of us are looking to go  
14 elsewhere so we could start practicing right  
15 away and working right away.

16           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: So, unless we  
17 change it, that is what we really have, we are  
18 going to have a lot of the younger people  
19 graduating; we need to work; we have to pay  
20 back college tuition at Bloomsburg.

21           MS. LEWIS: There are very few students  
22 that I know of that do plan to stick around in  
23 Pennsylvania to work. And even so, they are  
24 going to have to rely on, either, volunteering

1 to get their experience or having a member of  
2 the deaf community request them. And like I  
3 said, that's really difficult because we are  
4 not known in the deaf community yet. So, that  
5 is going to be really difficult for those that  
6 do stay in Pennsylvania.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: There are job  
8 opportunities right out of school currently  
9 outside of Pennsylvania?

10 MS. LEWIS: Absolutely. Absolutely.  
11 There is a huge shortage everywhere.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Thank you.

13 MS. LEWIS: Sure.

14 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

15 MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: The next testifier is  
17 Joe Fischgrund. Joe is a member of the  
18 Educational Resources for Children with Hearing  
19 Loss Committee.

20 Joe, come on up. Good morning.

21 MR. FISCHGRUND: Good morning and thank  
22 you for the opportunity.

23 My name is Joseph Fischgrund. I am the  
24 headmaster of the Pennsylvania School for the

1 Deaf here in Philadelphia. But I am also a  
2 member of the Educational Resources for  
3 Children with Hearing Loss, which is an  
4 advisory committee to the Bureau of Special  
5 Education in the Pennsylvania Department of  
6 Education.

7 ERCHL's mission is to promote excellence  
8 in the provision of educational services for  
9 all Pennsylvania students who are deaf and hard  
10 of hearing.

11 We are very active in providing feedback  
12 to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in  
13 the new writing of the Chapter 14, which is the  
14 special education regulations, which now  
15 contain a section as to qualifications for  
16 educational interpreters.

17 That was necessary with the changes in the  
18 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,  
19 IDEA. Educational interpreting is now a  
20 related service, such as speech therapy or  
21 occupational therapy. So, because it is an  
22 IDEA, the state has to provide guidelines or  
23 regulations.

24 In the state guidelines -- in the Chapter

1 14 regulations, which are in their final form  
2 now, and some of you are probably quite aware  
3 of them, they are expected to be pretty much in  
4 this form approved by the State Board, finally,  
5 and go into effect July 1st of this year.

6 In those regulations there are two --  
7 actually three criteria for educational  
8 interpreters. One is that they are a qualified  
9 -- they are a qualified interpreter or  
10 transliterator under the provisions of Act 57.

11 If you are not a -- not registered, you  
12 may practice as an educational interpreter if  
13 you receive a score, provide evidence of a  
14 score of 3.5 or greater on the EIPA, which is  
15 the Educational Interpreter Performance  
16 Assessment. And, also, a required 20 hours of  
17 staff development activities.

18 So, those -- that is what is in Chapter 14  
19 in the final form regulations for educational  
20 interpreters.

21 These standards set a reasonably high  
22 standard. There are, I believe, about 20 some  
23 states in the United States that have an  
24 educational interpreter standards, I think 17



1 of them are 3.5; there are a couple that are  
2 4.0 and I think 1 or 2 that are 3.0.

3 And the 20 hours is consistent with the  
4 RID certification requirements.

5 House Bill 1596 proposes to establish the  
6 category of provisional registration. This is  
7 not ERCHL's business, if you will, or our  
8 intent to comment on the general concept. And  
9 there has been a lot of very good arguments as  
10 to why a provisional interpreters -- why that  
11 is a good idea.

12 I would just add, related to the last  
13 testimony, CCP in Philadelphia, the Community  
14 College of Philadelphia has an Interpreter  
15 Training Program. Most -- almost all of those  
16 students do their practicum in the Philadelphia  
17 area. We have them at my school on a regular  
18 basis doing practicum hours.

19 So, it may be different in Bloomsburg, but  
20 there are opportunities for practicum here in  
21 Philadelphia for those students.

22 But, again, it varies from place to place.

23 We -- the ERCHL Advisory Committee has a  
24 great deal of regard for the Interpreter

1 Training Programs in the Commonwealth. In  
2 fact, we, as a committee, have advocated for  
3 the expansion of those programs, because there  
4 is, indeed, a shortage of educational  
5 interpreters just as there is interpreters for  
6 other settings.

7 However, graduation from those programs,  
8 alone, is not enough to ensure quality  
9 educational interpretation of transliteration  
10 services for deaf and hard of hearing students.

11 And while we are very sympathetic to the  
12 needs of student interpreters and we want to --  
13 all of us see a greater supply of interpreters  
14 in the Commonwealth, our overriding concern,  
15 our mission is, really, the well-being and the  
16 quality of services provided to deaf and hard  
17 of hearing students. That is our mission.

18 For many deaf students, the educational  
19 interpreter is their primary support. That is  
20 how they get their information in the  
21 classroom. And to allow interpreters who may  
22 not be qualified, essentially provides -- or  
23 deprives those students of a free and  
24 appropriate public education. Simply speaking,

1 if you are not getting the message from the  
2 teacher and you are not receiving the  
3 instruction in its whole form, you are not  
4 getting a full education. And then, in turn,  
5 when you are asked to take the PSSA and pass a  
6 test based on information that you didn't get  
7 in a classroom, then you get the kind of  
8 results that we are getting now, which are not  
9 as good as they should be.

10 ERCHL is concerned that school districts  
11 and other educational entities might  
12 inadvertently or mistakenly give individuals  
13 with proposed provisional certification -- or,  
14 rather, provisional registration as individuals  
15 who meet the qualifications in the final form  
16 Chapter 14 regulations, where it says that if  
17 an interpreter is registered. So, somebody  
18 could say, well, they are provisionally  
19 registered rather than registered, we can use  
20 them as an educational interpreter.

21 We understand that this -- we do not  
22 believe that that is the intent of House Bill  
23 1596.

24 However, in order to avoid any confusion,

1 we recommend that a specific language be added  
2 to this bill that states that provisionally  
3 registered interpreters are not -- may not be  
4 used in educational settings. Perhaps that  
5 might be done in that Section 3, which has the  
6 legal setting and the medical and mental health  
7 setting.

8 Maybe something could be added there that  
9 says, a provisionally registered interpreters  
10 are not considered to be a qualified -- under  
11 the chapter as educational interpreters. It  
12 probably is easier to do it here, then to turn  
13 around and try to get that now into Chapter 14,  
14 which has been through a year-and-a-half of  
15 hearings and is in its final form and been  
16 approved by just about everybody.

17 So, this would really be just another  
18 exception under this bill, and it would be  
19 similar to those statements made about medical  
20 or mental health settings.

21 Adding language to clarify that  
22 provisionally registered interpreters are not  
23 qualified educational interpreters is in the  
24 best interest of deaf and hard of hearing

1 children. And we respectfully urge you to add  
2 that language to House Bill 1596.

3 And I will just say that, although in my  
4 school we have tons of practicum hours for  
5 meetings and we do some things under  
6 supervision in the mainstream classes, we  
7 conduct -- we -- children that are there have a  
8 right to free and appropriate public education.  
9 They need that input fully and it needs to be  
10 only the very best input if they are to make  
11 progress in the curriculum. And I do not  
12 believe that it would be right, at all, for  
13 children to be, sort of, the practice, the  
14 practice grounds for interpreters who want to  
15 hone their skills.

16 So, we are very concerned about the  
17 educational interpreters and hope that the  
18 Committee will find a way to make it clear that  
19 provisionally registered interpreters are not  
20 qualified educational interpreters and that  
21 whatever confusion might arise out of that  
22 language be clarified in some way.

23 We thank you very much for the opportunity  
24 to present this piece of it, which is the

1 educational interpreter piece, and I would be  
2 certainly happy to respond to any questions  
3 that you might have.

4 Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you, Joe.

6 We do have some questions for you. We  
7 will start with Representative Stan Saylor.

8 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Thank you,  
9 Mr. Fischgrund.

10 Just a couple of basic questions. In your  
11 school, how many students are there?

12 MR. FISCHGRUND: In my school there are  
13 212 students.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: And what are the  
15 age brackets?

16 MR. FISCHGRUND: We have preschool through  
17 age 21. We also have -- actually it is a  
18 separate program, zero to three intervention  
19 program, and we also have adult programs.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Okay. If I was a  
21 parent of a deaf student, what would it cost me  
22 to enter my student in your school?

23 MR. FISCHGRUND: Nothing.

24 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Nothing?

1 MR. FISCHGRUND: There is no tuition.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: It is all done by  
3 the state?

4 MR. FISCHGRUND: Yes. We are in the state  
5 of regulations as an option along the continuum  
6 of alternative placements.

7 If the IAP says it is a special school,  
8 that is what the child needs, that is fully  
9 paid for. There is a rather complicated  
10 formula about how much the district pays and  
11 how much the Commonwealth pays. This is a  
12 60/40 split, but that, I think, technicalities  
13 in other areas. But no tuition.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: Okay. And what  
15 are the number of deaf schools in Pennsylvania?

16 MR. FISCHGRUND: There are three full, if  
17 you will, full deaf schools or schools for the  
18 deaf in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania School for  
19 the Deaf here in this area.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: How many?

21 MR. FISCHGRUND: The Western Pennsylvania  
22 School in Pittsburgh, with, approximately, 195  
23 students and the State School for the Deaf,  
24 which is a state operated school in Scranton

1 with, approximately, 100 students. There is,  
2 also, a small primarily oral auditory program  
3 in Pittsburgh, the DePaul School for Speech and  
4 Hearing.

5 Two of the schools, PSD and the Western  
6 Pennsylvania School for the Deaf are in that  
7 group in the line items, the charter schools  
8 for the deaf and blind children. Now, it is  
9 similar -- parallel to the approved private  
10 school lines.

11 So, there are two state supported schools  
12 and one state operated school.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: So, if I am a  
14 parent in Dauphin or York or Lancaster County,  
15 I would have to send my son or daughter to, I  
16 guess, Scranton?

17 MR. FISCHGRUND: If you wanted a special  
18 school program, a residential, then you would  
19 have -- then that student would, if they were  
20 to far to commute, would be placed through the  
21 Scranton State School for the Deaf or, again,  
22 the IAP team would make that decision, may  
23 choose the Western Pennsylvania School for the  
24 Deaf.



1           We do not have a residential program here  
2           in Philadelphia.

3           Also, just about every intermediate unit  
4           has programs for deaf and hard of hearing  
5           students and, actually, only about 30 percent  
6           of all the deaf students in Pennsylvania are  
7           educated in the special schools. But,  
8           primarily, most deaf students and hard of  
9           hearing students are educated in regular  
10          education settings, either, in specialized  
11          classes in the IUs or in school district  
12          classes.

13          School District of Philadelphia, for  
14          example, operates several classrooms in their  
15          public school system.

16          REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: I guess the  
17          concern that I have in getting a license  
18          anywhere has always been two things. I have  
19          seen in the license of different professions  
20          that, in many, and I repeat, many cases, it  
21          means a rising cost of services, particularly  
22          if you are using the services.

23          Because -- and a perfect example, York  
24          County and everywhere else, auctioneers get

1 licensed and today, you got to go through an  
2 apprenticeship. Guess what; auctioneers  
3 brought in less apprentice students when they  
4 bring in, and they are required to bring in.

5 And I guess my concern is, as we tighten  
6 restrictions, and I think -- I really believe  
7 Representative Eachus's bill is able to do it,  
8 but I do have great concerns and some of the  
9 recommendations to make it tighter is that, at  
10 what point do we hurt services for the deaf?

11 You know, I am from Central Pennsylvania.  
12 There is not much to choose from. I don't get  
13 the same quality of services that I may get if  
14 I lived in Philadelphia or if I have children  
15 in Pittsburgh or something like that.

16 So, I guess my concern is, Central  
17 Pennsylvania is -- wait a minute, I don't have  
18 the same services available to my children, and  
19 does that mean that my children aren't going to  
20 have the top quality that they deserve that the  
21 children, say, in Philadelphia are getting?  
22 And I am not picking on Philadelphia. I am  
23 saying, as we narrow or make these things  
24 tougher, does it make it tough for somebody who

1       may want to go to school in Central  
2       Pennsylvania, Dauphin or Harrisburg or  
3       whatever, to provide this education in other  
4       schools?

5               MR. FISCHGRUND: Let me just clarify one  
6       thing. The schools -- our school, we don't --  
7       we have staff interpreters for meetings and  
8       things, but all of our teachers conduct classes  
9       in sign language. So, we don't have  
10      interpreters in all our classes.

11             All of our teachers are required to meet a  
12      standard on a national measure of American Sign  
13      Language. And so the need for educational  
14      interpreting is really in the regular education  
15      programs. And I think, certainly, a parent in  
16      an area where there are not a lot of  
17      interpreters is faced with a dilemma, because  
18      they want their child to be -- to live at home,  
19      be at home. They want them educated in their  
20      local school. At the same time, the  
21      interpreter in that classroom is only  
22      delivering 60 percent of the message. They are  
23      not getting an education.

24             And, so -- I don't know. And I think

1 unless we raise -- this is part of what  
2 happened with Chapter 14. Yes, there is an  
3 issue of supply and demand, but we have to  
4 remember that these are children.

5 So, if you have a child that gets left  
6 behind because their interpreter in  
7 fourth grade is not delivering the social  
8 studies content, there is a child who is going  
9 to be behind and struggle with the PSSA test  
10 and have difficulty achieving proficiency  
11 throughout their school career. And when it  
12 comes to these graduate competency assessments,  
13 they are going to say, well, I was never taught  
14 this. And what it is, is that they never got  
15 it through high qualified interpretation.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: And I agree with  
17 you, but at what point do we say -- because we  
18 are already having a shortage and now we are  
19 going to make the requirements tighter.

20 How far do we make them tighter that we  
21 now are hurting areas that don't have those  
22 services or who are attempting to fill in those  
23 services with people who aren't quite where we  
24 want them -- quite where we want them all and

1 we want them aboard.

2 But we just heard from a student and, in  
3 fact, a lot of them not staying in  
4 Pennsylvania. And you would think that if, in  
5 your experience, and we have a shortage in  
6 Pennsylvania, because it should be well paying  
7 because of that demand and supply. You are  
8 saying that you are coming out of school with  
9 this kind of education after a four-year degree  
10 should mean, you can find a job in Pennsylvania  
11 and it should pay you darn well, maybe as much  
12 as a legislature.

13 But, seriously, I have -- like I said, I  
14 have no family members or friends that have  
15 deaf children. And I guess that I could say  
16 that I am blessed to a degree because, nobody  
17 has that handicap as such.

18 But the bottom line is, and I am serious  
19 when I sit here and talk to you today, I am  
20 speaking from ignorance because I haven't seen  
21 what these people have to go through. I have  
22 been in schools where I've seen students who  
23 are hard of hearing or deaf in our schools in  
24 York County and I question all the time, are

1 these students getting what they need?

2 And, so, I like the idea of higher  
3 standards, but I also sit there and say, these  
4 higher standards, are they going to cost me or  
5 York County? Our children have the services  
6 the need, even if it is a minimal, because they  
7 don't have a school for the deaf in York County  
8 or Adam County.

9 And I like to say that I know where you  
10 are coming from. I am not saying that you are  
11 wrong, I am just saying, I come from an area  
12 that is not Philadelphia, doesn't have those  
13 services, and I think it is great that you do  
14 here. Your school is doing a great job.

15 MR. FISCHGRUND: Thank you.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SAYLOR: And I mean that  
17 sincerely, but, also, I come from an area that  
18 doesn't have that service, who would probably  
19 like to see more of those services provided in  
20 my area. Just wonder how far do we go until we  
21 hurt my area of the state?

22 Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you,  
24 Representative.

1           Representative Wansacz.

2           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Thank you,  
3           Mr. Chairman.

4           First up, Mr. Saylor, your children in  
5           York County are welcomed in Scranton any time  
6           that you want a beautiful place.

7           MR. FISCHGRUND: With an excellent school  
8           for the deaf.

9           REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: Absolutely. I am  
10          from the Scranton area.

11          My question is, are you seeing a shortage,  
12          now, in the Scranton State School for the Deaf  
13          or any other facility with teachers right now?

14          MR. FISCHGRUND: There is a shortage of  
15          special education teachers in general. There  
16          is a shortage of certified and qualified  
17          teachers of deaf and hard of hearing  
18          individuals for a variety of educational  
19          settings, both. In special schools like mine,  
20          we have vacancies every year and they are hard  
21          to fill. And I know that the mainstream  
22          settings also have difficulty recruiting.

23          If you are asking me to put in a plug for  
24          more teacher preparations in Pennsylvania for

1 teachers of deaf and hard of hearing children,  
2 we absolutely need it. We have the Bloomsburg  
3 program, which prepares teachers as well as  
4 interpreters, the IUP has a teacher preparation  
5 program, the University of Pittsburgh just  
6 recently closed their teacher preparation  
7 program of deafness and there is no program in  
8 the Philadelphia area.

9 So, we hire teachers from Gallaudet  
10 University in Washington, DC and often, quite  
11 often out of state, although we hired two  
12 Bloomsburg graduates last year.

13 So, there is a shortage of teachers of the  
14 deaf who have the communication skills and all  
15 the other skills necessary in Pennsylvania.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WANSACZ: What concerns me  
17 is that we are seeing these shortages and what  
18 Representative Saylor raises, if we make the  
19 regulations to tough, the young lady and these  
20 students are going to be leaving our state and  
21 going somewhere else. We get out of college,  
22 everybody says, the first thing that you are  
23 looking for is a job.

24 So, if you can't get a job in Pennsylvania



1 to pay back your bills, you can't expect these  
2 people to work for nothing. Just like what you  
3 said you're going to do, you are not going to  
4 stay here in Pennsylvania.

5 So, that is a concern that I think -- what  
6 worries me, I think that it is in the bill, is  
7 that you're saying to those graduates, here is  
8 the experience before we will hire you. But  
9 how -- they are in this catch 22, where they  
10 can't get that experience, you know, without  
11 getting hired.

12 So, I know that we do -- in physical  
13 therapists, I believe, before they pass their  
14 license or board, they are allowed to work.  
15 They are allowed to take a job and work, and if  
16 they don't pass that exam, then they are in  
17 trouble. But they can come right out of school  
18 to be hired with the prose that they have to  
19 pass the exam.

20 So, I think it is, maybe, something that  
21 we need to look at, you know, and I would  
22 encourage you to, you know, to try to work with  
23 the Committee in finding ways that we can get  
24 qualifying people in these classrooms.

1           And it also needs to be where the  
2           students, when they get out of school can, you  
3           know, get a job and start doing what they are  
4           trained to do.

5           MR. FISCHGRUND:  If we want to always be  
6           clear that there is interpreter teacher of the  
7           deaf who is a classroom teacher and an  
8           educational interpreter.  And I, personally --  
9           and I think that all of us at ERCHL would  
10          agree, that we need more students, we need  
11          practicum opportunities.

12          I think what we are saying is, please  
13          don't let the interpreters practice on children  
14          who are trying to get an education, because the  
15          cost of that is, for those children, can be  
16          really, really disastrous.  And I don't have to  
17          tell you that a poorly educated workforce is a  
18          workforce that is not productive.

19          So, if we want deaf students to graduate  
20          high school, to go on to college, if we want  
21          them to be productive individuals in the  
22          workforce, they need to get all of the  
23          information in a regular education classroom  
24          that the hearing student gets, and that is a

1        tremendous feat and you have to be really  
2        highly qualified.

3            Educational interpreting is different from  
4        interpreting, either, platform interpreting or  
5        one-to-one in a mortgage closing or at a, you  
6        know, meeting with the electric company about  
7        your bill. You are talking about being able to  
8        voice for that child who may raise their hand  
9        and want to sign to the teacher, you have  
10       cross-conversations, teachers who turn their  
11       back and write on the board while they are  
12       talking and the deaf students watching the  
13       interpreter.

14           And, so, it is a very complex -- and it  
15        requires a great deal of skill and practice,  
16        and perhaps there is a way to do that, again,  
17        similar to being accompanied by a qualified  
18        educational interpreter.

19           In fact, we have practicum students from  
20        CCP who go with our educational interpreter,  
21        who is registered, to a mainstream classroom  
22        and observe. We do not permit them to  
23        interpret the full lesson for that child  
24        because that child only has one chance to get

1        what is happening in that classroom, and public  
2        classrooms move quickly. And if that  
3        interpreter is not -- practiced enough and gets  
4        behind, that child has just missed a whole  
5        chunk of instruction and that is gone.

6            So, I think we absolutely support the idea  
7        of increasing the pool of interpreters and  
8        increasing the pool of educational  
9        interpreters, but we are just very concerned.

10           Look, there is a shortage of educational  
11        interpreters, and when the Chapter 14  
12        regulations, as written, go into effect, there  
13        will be a greater shortage, because many of the  
14        interpreters currently working in schools,  
15        school districts and intermediate in the  
16        Commonwealth, are neither registered with ODHH  
17        or they have not scored a 3.5 on the EIPA.

18           And, by the way, the people who made --  
19        who developed the EIPA, their recommendation is  
20        4.0 as a minimum. And that would really limit  
21        the pool.

22           And, so, the question comes down, do you  
23        want a, you know -- there has to be a better  
24        way to do this. But one way to do it is not to

1 have interpreters practicing on children who  
2 are there to get an education.

3 And, so, perhaps something -- they could  
4 practice in an educational setting with a  
5 registered or qualified interpreter.

6 But to let -- and there may be some  
7 students who can go right into a fourth grade  
8 class and interpret, but there are also some  
9 interpreting students -- and we have a very  
10 close relationship with the CCP program -- they  
11 simply can't go into a tenth grade biology  
12 class and interpret the teacher's lecture or  
13 the science experiment, and the deaf student  
14 is, basically, left out of that class.

15 So, they are, in fact, that is not  
16 inclusion, that is not mainstreaming, that is  
17 isolation. So, obviously, we are passionate  
18 about it.

19 But education interpreting, I am just  
20 concerned that people will say, oh, they are  
21 provisional interpreting, we can just put them  
22 in the classroom. And I think that that is a  
23 bad thing for deaf children.

24 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Any other questions from

1 the Committee Members?

2 (Whereupon, there was no  
3 response.)

4 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I think that we are all  
5 trying to do what is best for this segment of  
6 our society. One thing that I wanted to  
7 mention is that, I know because I have friends  
8 and neighbors, as far as reading lips, isn't  
9 there a segment out there of our hearing  
10 impaired that read lips very well?

11 MR. FISCHGRUND: There are. There are  
12 many programs in the Commonwealth which are  
13 auditory oral programs in which use of residual  
14 hearing or hearing aids or cochlear implants or  
15 FM systems and the use of speech reading are  
16 focused.

17 There are a number in DePaul's in school  
18 for speech and hearing in Pittsburgh, does not  
19 use sign language. And they do have profounded  
20 deaf children there. There are both oral  
21 auditory programs in classrooms in Montgomery  
22 County and there are in some intermediate  
23 units, signing classrooms. The Lancaster,  
24 Lebanon IU has a number of intermediate unit

1 classrooms that use interpreters. They also  
2 conduct some oral auditory class where student  
3 deaf and hard of hearing students are taught  
4 without the use of sign language.

5 So, there is a range of students. But for  
6 a student who has -- who is born profoundly  
7 deaf and not having all of that input, that  
8 language that comes into your brain as an  
9 infant and as a toddler, if you don't hear it,  
10 and try it some night, turn off the sound on  
11 the news or try to read Brian Williams lips and  
12 see how much of the news you get, and then if I  
13 made up a test on that news item, I see how you  
14 did on the test.

15 So, speech reading works for some people  
16 in addition to, either, signing. Many deaf  
17 individuals as you sign will also be watching  
18 your mouth articulation. It is all part of  
19 understanding the message. But for many  
20 students, the message comes in through these  
21 (indicating), through the eyes, not through  
22 here (indicating), and it comes in through  
23 information that is on the hands. And that is  
24 -- that is a fact of life of being a deaf

1 individual.

2 And, so, you can work on speech reading  
3 and you can work on auditory training and you  
4 are trying to, in a sense, work on those things  
5 that that individual doesn't do well, hear.

6 Rather than use that asset, which is  
7 vision, and we know that the American Sign  
8 Language can get the same language to the brain  
9 as any language, which is why deaf children of  
10 signing deaf parents are -- study in normal  
11 language development, because they have  
12 language from day one.

13 So, getting language into the brain is  
14 what it is all about. I think that is true for  
15 hearing children and deaf children and children  
16 in school who depend on sign language. If they  
17 don't get it, every -- as much of the message  
18 as humanly possible, they are at a tremendous  
19 disadvantage in school, even if they are lip  
20 readers.

21 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Last thing that I want  
22 to clarify, Joe, is that right now we do not  
23 have this provisional registration; are there  
24 interpreters in our public education classrooms



1 right now that are, neither, licensed, okay,  
2 and are teaching in our public classrooms  
3 currently?

4 MR. FISCHGRUND: There are a large number  
5 of individuals employed as educational  
6 interpreters. A significant percentage of  
7 those individuals practicing, who are in  
8 classrooms interpreting for children who are,  
9 neither, registered with ODHH, nor do they meet  
10 the 3.5 on the EIPA.

11 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: So, that is going on  
12 right now.

13 MR. FISCHGRUND: But the new Chapter 14  
14 regulations say that you have to meet this  
15 highest standard. So, something is going to  
16 happen in July.

17 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I thank you very much  
18 for your testimony, Joe.

19 MR. FISCHGRUND: Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Our next testifier is Jo  
21 Madden. Jo is the interpreter manager of  
22 Philadelphia VRS Interpreting Center, Sorenson  
23 Communications.

24 MS. MADDEN: Good afternoon.

1           CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: It is actually  
2           afternoon, yes.

3           MS. MADDEN: Thank you very much for  
4           allowing me the opportunity to come out and  
5           testify in front of the panel.

6           Sorenson Video Relay Service, VRS, is a  
7           free service provided by Sorenson  
8           Communications, enables deaf and hard of  
9           hearing individuals to conduct video relay  
10          calls to family, friends and business  
11          associates through a certified sign language  
12          interpreter, Sorenson videophone, TV and the  
13          high-speed Internet connection.

14          The deaf user sees an interpreter on their  
15          TV and signs to the interpreter, who then  
16          contacts the hearing user via a standard phone  
17          line and relays the conversation between the  
18          two parties.

19          Sorenson encourages all interpreters to  
20          pursue and maintain the highest standards of  
21          excellence through education and mentorship  
22          offered through the Professional Development  
23          Department.

24          This includes workshop attendance and

1 independent study opportunities to increase  
2 one's level of certification and skill. For  
3 interpreters who are qualified but often not  
4 yet certified, we offer participation in our  
5 Video Interpreter Provisional Mentorship  
6 Program.

7 Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of  
8 Act 57, Sorenson is unable to provide this VI-P  
9 opportunity within the state of Pennsylvania.

10 We believe and support House Bill 1596,  
11 believing that the amendment, which allows  
12 interpreters to provisionally register and work  
13 in the state of Pennsylvania, also, will allow  
14 them to participate in our VI-P program and  
15 work for Sorenson.

16 We do provide skill building workshops in  
17 Pennsylvania, but we are not able to provide  
18 the mentorship within on VRS centers in  
19 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

20 By providing our VI-P program in more than  
21 60 of our VRS centers company wide encompassing  
22 more than 40 states, Puerto Rico and Canada,  
23 Sorenson Communications has recognized and is  
24 taking innovative steps to address the national

1 sign language interpreter shortage.

2 We would like to add Pennsylvania to our  
3 ever growing list of states where we provide  
4 cutting-edge mentorship and interpreter  
5 training opportunities for working and future  
6 interpreters in the state.

7 The trainers and mentors who are employed  
8 by Sorenson Communications are highly qualified  
9 educators specializing in interpreting,  
10 education and mentoring. Many hold advanced  
11 degrees and this pool of talent is not being  
12 utilized in Pennsylvania due to the limitations  
13 set forth by Act 57.

14 At the present time, there is simply not  
15 enough qualified interpreters to meet the ever  
16 growing demands in the educational, community  
17 and VRS environments. There are roughly 10,000  
18 interpreters, both state and nationally  
19 certified, to meet the needs of more than  
20 2 million deaf and hard of hearing individuals  
21 who utilize this service of interpreters.

22 The mentorship program is working hard to  
23 increase the number of qualified interpreters,  
24 not only for VRS setting, but for providing

1 support and service in their local deaf  
2 communities.

3 If allowed to provide VI-P Program  
4 opportunities in Pennsylvania, interpreters  
5 will receive more than 60 hours of personalized  
6 mentorship with mentors who have specialized in  
7 an ongoing training in mentorship, permanent  
8 employment opportunity, ongoing skill building,  
9 support of their goal to achieve national  
10 certification through the Registry of  
11 Interpreters for the Deaf.

12 The VI-P- Program at Sorenson  
13 Communications has more than -- has helped more  
14 than 150 participants attain certification upon  
15 completion of the program while they continue  
16 to work in their home community base as a VRS  
17 interpreter.

18 It is our intention to provide such  
19 mentorship opportunities to the interpreter  
20 population in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.  
21 This, in turn, provides an invaluable service  
22 and specialized skill made available to the  
23 deaf and hard of hearing constituents within  
24 the state.

1 I thank you for your time. If you have  
2 any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much.

4 Are there any questions of Miss Madden  
5 from the Committee?

6 Seeing none, hearing none, I want to thank  
7 you for your patiences in waiting to testify  
8 and I would like to thank all the testifiers  
9 today for their very important testimony. I  
10 would also like to thank Temple University,  
11 Dennis Lynch, in particular, for hosting this  
12 panel and hearing, and their hospitality is  
13 very good and appreciated.

14 Seeing no further questions, hearing is  
15 adjourned. Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the following  
17 testimony was submitted and  
18 stenographically transcribed.)

19 "MS. BENTLEY-SASSAMAN: I am pleased to  
20 offer my testimony in support of House Bill  
21 1596, which will amend Act 57 of July 2, 2004.

22 "Act 57 provides for 'State registration  
23 of individuals providing sign language  
24 interpreting and transliterating services to

1 individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing".

2 "Act 57 mandates interpreters in the state  
3 of Pennsylvania to be nationally certified and  
4 registered with the Office of the Deaf and Hard  
5 of Hearing in order to work and earn a living  
6 as an interpreter.

7 "During the comment period on this law, I,  
8 and many others, asked for a grace period for  
9 interpreters that recently graduated from an  
10 Interpreter Training Program, ITP. This  
11 request was grossly ignored. House Bill 1596  
12 is a way to rectify this oversight.

13 "I do believe that interpreters who  
14 graduate from an ITP possess the skills  
15 required of an entry-level interpreter.

16 "There are some within the interpreting  
17 community who do not want non-registered  
18 interpreters to work in the state of  
19 Pennsylvania. Those interpreters forgot how  
20 they survived after graduating from their ITP.  
21 No interpreter that I know of graduated and  
22 became certified the day after graduation. In  
23 essence, this is what Act 57 requires.

24 "The Registry of Interpreters for the

1 Deaf, Incorporated, (RID), is the accreditation  
2 body for interpreter certification in the  
3 United States.

4 "RID suggests that the average interpreter  
5 needs three to five years of experience prior  
6 to becoming certified. Actually, RID allows a  
7 five-year time-period for an interpreter to  
8 complete the certification process. This  
9 includes passing the written examination and  
10 the performance examination. Upon successful  
11 completion of both these requirements, national  
12 certification is awarded.

13 "House Bill 1596 will require  
14 provisionally registered interpreters to  
15 complete this process in three years, thus  
16 ensuring more highly qualified interpreters  
17 sooner. Entry-level interpreters who are  
18 allowed to register provisionally and work in  
19 Pennsylvania will be able to gain the  
20 experience necessary to satisfy this  
21 requirement.

22 "According to Act 57, non-certified,  
23 non-registered interpreters can work as  
24 volunteers in religious settings, which are not



1 always for pay, and upon request of a deaf  
2 individual. This is hardly a way for a new  
3 interpreter to gain experience. They would  
4 have to work a part-time job in an unrelated  
5 field in order to make ends meet.

6 "House Bill 1596 will open up more  
7 opportunities for provisionally registered  
8 interpreters to work, gain the experience they  
9 need and become certified and registered, as  
10 explained above.

11 "As an instructor at the only four-year  
12 ITP in the state, Bloomsburg University of  
13 Pennsylvania, I teach the RID's Code of  
14 Professional Conduct, CPC, to my students.

15 "Students are required to write a paper in  
16 which they apply the tenets of the CPC to  
17 various interpreting situations. Tenet 2.0 of  
18 the CPC states, 'Interpreters possess the  
19 professional skills and knowledge required for  
20 the specific interpreting situation' (rid.org).  
21 Students are taught that if they do not have  
22 the skills to interpret in a specific  
23 situation, they are required, ethically, to  
24 turn down that assignment.

1           "For example, if there was a call to  
2           interpret in a physician's office for a regular  
3           checkup or for a common cold, a provisionally  
4           registered interpreter would possess the skills  
5           necessary to perform an effective  
6           interpretation. If a provisionally registered  
7           interpreter were asked to come in for a life or  
8           death situation, the interpreter, knowing that  
9           they do not possess the skills for the  
10          assignment, should turn it down. If a  
11          scheduled assignment does turn into a life or  
12          death situation, interpreters are required by  
13          Tenet 2.4 of the CPC to 'request support when  
14          needed to fully convey the message or to  
15          address exceptional communication challenges'  
16          (rid.org). This would mean to call in a  
17          state-registered interpreter or a deaf  
18          interpreter.

19                 "However, the original Act 57, Section 4  
20                 (b)(2) 'Exceptions,' does make allowance for  
21                 this situation by stating, 'An individual  
22                 engaged in interpreting or transliterating  
23                 during an emergency, when a delay in obtaining  
24                 a state-registered interpreter or

1 state-registered transliterator might lead to  
2 injury or loss to the individual requiring the  
3 services.

4 "Tenet 3.0 of the CPC states,  
5 'Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner  
6 appropriate to the specific interpreting  
7 situation' (rid.org). Tenet 3 is broken down  
8 even further in Tenet 3.2 by stating, 'decline  
9 assignments or withdraw from the interpreting  
10 profession when not competent due to physical,  
11 mental or emotional factors' (rid.org). If the  
12 interpreter is not competent to perform the  
13 assignment, they must withdraw from it.

14 "Students are drilled on the CPC in  
15 several ways during their training. Ethical  
16 situation scenarios are discussed in class.  
17 Additional knowledge is gained through their  
18 research paper. It is included on the final  
19 exam, and real-life ethical situations are  
20 experienced with students' certified,  
21 state-registered mentors.

22 "Additionally, the RID/National  
23 Association for the Deaf, NAD, National  
24 Interpreter Certification, NIC, written test

1 deals extensively with ethical, cultural,  
2 linguistic and interpreting theory knowledge.

3 "Interpreters that graduate from an ITP  
4 know how they should behave ethically.

5 "At Bloomsburg University, we are  
6 currently adding the NIC written test to our  
7 graduation requirements. Students will be  
8 required to take the test prior to graduation,  
9 thus be ready to provisionally register when  
10 they complete their practicum.

11 "As mentioned above, recent graduates from  
12 an ITP should be at entry level for the  
13 profession. This means that they can interpret  
14 on their own without supervision.

15 "The reason for practicum is so that the  
16 interpreting intern acquires as much experience  
17 as possible in a wide variety of settings in  
18 order to prepare them to interpret as a  
19 professional upon completion of their  
20 practicum.

21 "House Bill 1596 will allow practicum  
22 students in Pennsylvania to receive more  
23 experience than Act 57 currently does. Act 57  
24 prohibits practicum students from interpreting

1 in medical or mental health settings.

2 "Some of my students left and are planning  
3 to leave the state in order to be able to  
4 interpret in these types of settings on their  
5 practicum. By leaving Pennsylvania for  
6 practicum, agencies have hired my students and  
7 they do not come back to Pennsylvania. This  
8 decreases the number of available, qualified  
9 interpreters in the state and in the long run,  
10 affects the provision of services for our deaf  
11 and hard of hearing population. I am also  
12 aware of interns in the Philadelphia area who  
13 travel to New Jersey to interpret and gain  
14 experience in medical and mental health  
15 settings.

16 "House bill 1596 will allow interpreting  
17 interns to interpret in medical and mental  
18 health settings with their mentors right here  
19 in Pennsylvania. Graduates will then have the  
20 experience necessary to interpret in medical  
21 settings at an entry level while provisionally  
22 registered.

23 "RID has documented the current nationwide  
24 interpreter shortage. Through personal

1 communication with three interpreting agencies,  
2 I have learned that we do not have enough  
3 interpreters in Pennsylvania to fill all the  
4 assignment requests that come in every year.  
5 Provisional registration, as allowed by House  
6 Bill 1596, will help alleviate this shortage by  
7 encouraging recent graduates to remain in or  
8 return to Pennsylvania.

9 "Provisionally registered interpreters do  
10 not need to be supervised by a registered  
11 interpreter at all their assignments. This is  
12 a logistical nightmare.

13 "Not many registered interpreters would be  
14 willing to volunteer and go to assignments to  
15 supervise provisionally registered  
16 interpreters. It is impossible for this to  
17 take place for every assignment.

18 "During their practicum, student interns  
19 are supervised at all times by a certified,  
20 state-registered interpreter and receive  
21 appropriate feedback in order to enhance their  
22 skill. Once they complete their practicum and  
23 pass the written test, they should be at an  
24 entry level and able to interpret on their own.

1           "Pennsylvania chapter of RID (PARID) is in  
2           the process of setting up a mentorship program  
3           for both state-registered and non-registered  
4           interpreters. Protégés will be paired with a  
5           mentor to work on interpreting skills for  
6           specific goals.

7           "One example is a state-registered  
8           interpreter who may want to obtain their legal  
9           certificate, can enter the program and be  
10          paired with a state-registered or a  
11          provisionally registered interpreter with a  
12          state-registered interpreter for the same  
13          reason. This is an exciting program with many  
14          potential benefits.

15          "However, at this time, the program is not  
16          yet up and running and is very limited as to  
17          the number of interpreters it can sustain.  
18          Only 10 interpreters will be considered for the  
19          NIC track and only 10 for the educational  
20          interpreter track.

21          "Including a required mentorship in House  
22          Bill 1596 is unreasonable, considering there  
23          are at least five years of recent ITP graduates  
24          that would fall into this category.

1            "In the recent past, the Bloomsburg  
2            University ITP was in danger of closing. In  
3            fact, the ITP was placed on moratorium for a  
4            few years. Fortunately, after major revisions,  
5            the ITP will re-open for the fall 2008  
6            semester.

7            "An integral part of any ITP is  
8            observation hours. Our students will be  
9            required to log an increased number of  
10           observation hours. As students observe working  
11           interpreters, they gain a better understanding  
12           of the interpreting profession and are able to  
13           expand their vocabulary base.

14           "Also, new to the program will be a skill  
15           screening. This screening will take place  
16           during the spring semester of the student's  
17           sophomore year. We deem this screening  
18           necessary to ensure that Bloomsburg ITP  
19           graduates can effectively interpret at an entry  
20           level upon graduation. I do not know of other  
21           ITP's in this state that insist upon screening  
22           for their students, but we feel it is vital to  
23           our students' success.

24           "If students do not pass the screening,



1       they are required to retake ASL 3 and be  
2       screened again at the end of the summer, or  
3       change their major. More quality control  
4       incorporated into an ITP produces better  
5       results.

6                "In summary, as an interpreting  
7       instructor, I believe that interpreters  
8       graduating from an ITP should be allowed to  
9       provisionally register for up to three years  
10      with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
11      and work unsupervised in most settings during  
12      those three years.

13              "I believe they will use discretion when  
14      accepting assignments from the agencies for  
15      which they work.

16              "Most agencies screen the interpreters  
17      they hire. I was screened by every agency I  
18      worked for and I worked for nearly three years  
19      before attaining certification and becoming  
20      state-registered.

21              "Agency screening will act as a measuring  
22      stick, a support and a filter for the  
23      provisionally registered interpreter. The only  
24      settings that should be restricted until

1 certification is achieved are the legal and  
2 mental health settings.

3 "Thank you for allowing me to participate  
4 in this hearing. It is my opinion that House  
5 Bill 1596 will serve to strengthen Act 57 and  
6 it is my hope that it will be passed soon.

7 "For your consideration, I have included a  
8 copy of an article I wrote in May 2007 to  
9 address the limits of Act 57. It was published  
10 in the monthly RID publication, RID Views.

11 "Pennsylvania Act 57: Perspective of an  
12 interpreter educator.

13 "July 1, 2005 marked a milestone for the  
14 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; it was the date  
15 that Act 57, 'The Sign Language Interpreter and  
16 Transliterator State Registration Act' was  
17 implemented (Act 57 can be found on the  
18 Pennsylvania RID (PARID's) Web site at  
19 [www.parid.org](http://www.parid.org)).

20 "This legislation now requires  
21 interpreters in Pennsylvania to be registered  
22 with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
23 (ODHH) in order to work as an interpreter.

24 "To register, an interpreter must hold a

1 certification approved by ODHH.

2 "After 10 years, Pennsylvania finally has  
3 a law that ensures quality to the deaf and  
4 hearing consumers that utilize the services of  
5 interpreters. There are several exemptions for  
6 interpreters that are working toward their  
7 certification.

8 "Additionally, certification is not  
9 required to interpret in religious settings,  
10 educational settings (EIPA regulations through  
11 the State Board of Education are currently  
12 pending), when the interpreter is specifically  
13 requested by a deaf consumer or when the  
14 interpreter volunteers their time.

15 "Act 57 is a wonderful achievement for the  
16 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as for the  
17 profession of interpreting.

18 "However, one downside of the legislation  
19 is that no provision or grace period was made  
20 for students who are graduating from an  
21 Interpreter Education Program (IP).

22 "As an interpreter educator, I am now  
23 seeing many students doing their internship out  
24 of state with the goal of then staying in a

1 state where certification is immediately not  
2 required for them to work. That way they can  
3 continue to work and earn a living while honing  
4 their skills to become certified.

5 "In Pennsylvania, Act 57 has placed new  
6 limitations on what settings students can  
7 interpret in during their practicum.

8 "Students are prohibited from interpreting  
9 in any medical situation as well as mental  
10 health and legal setting. I do agree with the  
11 legal and certain mental health situations, but  
12 I do feel that some medical settings are fine  
13 for students to interpret in as long as they  
14 are under supervision.

15 "These limitations do not provide students  
16 the full experience that they may need to  
17 confidently interpret in the community when  
18 they graduate. Upon graduation, students are  
19 limited to interpreting in areas the law  
20 exempts such as, in the educational setting or  
21 waiting for deaf person to specifically request  
22 them so they can work.

23 "In the near future, I believe that this  
24 exodus of recently graduated interpreters will

1 hinder Pennsylvania's ability to provide  
2 services for our deaf and hard of hearing  
3 populations.

4 "PARID is currently working on a  
5 mentorship program which will provide a venue  
6 for non-certified interpreters to work on their  
7 certification, but this program is not yet up  
8 and running.

9 "Although I am excited about the potential  
10 for our new legislation to provide qualified  
11 services for our consumers, a word of caution  
12 is necessary for states currently drafting  
13 certification legislation requirements.

14 Include provisions for students graduating from  
15 IPs so that you can retain your new  
16 interpreters instead of running the risk of  
17 losing them to other states.

18 "RID's policy paper on model legislation  
19 (which can be found on their Web site, rid.org)  
20 is the perfect place to start."

21 "MS. DECKERT: I would like to begin by  
22 expressing my gratitude to the Committee for  
23 affording me the opportunity to come and  
24 testify regarding the amendments to Act 57

1 through House Bill 1596.

2 "I firmly support the amendment due to the  
3 personal and professional impact Act 57 has had  
4 on my interpreting career.

5 "I grew up in Virginia. I came to  
6 Pennsylvania to pursue my goal of becoming a  
7 Sign Language Interpreter/Transliterater at  
8 Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania during  
9 the fall of 2003.

10 "Bloomsburg University had a wonderful  
11 reputation for providing a rigorous and  
12 enriching bachelor's degree in ASL/English  
13 Interpreting.

14 "After attending school for a few years, I  
15 decided to relocate to Pennsylvania and  
16 purchased a house in Bloomsburg. I had hopes  
17 of starting my professional career in  
18 Pennsylvania.

19 "In July of 2005, those hopes were  
20 significantly impacted by the passing of Act  
21 57. I understood and appreciated the idea  
22 behind the act, and still do. I, too, believe  
23 it should be every interpreter's goal to become  
24 RID certified.

1           "However, the impractical implications on  
2 my and other students' careers were  
3 disconcerting.

4           "Due to the nature of the original act, I  
5 was faced with a difficult decision upon  
6 graduation; I could either stay in Pennsylvania  
7 and try to do volunteer assignments while  
8 continuing to work my part-time job in retail,  
9 or move out of state and begin my professional  
10 career as an interpreter.

11           "In August of 2007, when, student loan  
12 payments began in addition to my mortgage  
13 payments, I made the only choice I felt I had.  
14 I accepted a full-time staff position at  
15 Northern Virginia Community College and moved  
16 back to my hometown.

17           "Three months prior to graduation, the  
18 interpreting students at Bloomsburg University  
19 are required to undergo a practicum. This is  
20 where my skills really started to develop. I  
21 learned more in those three months than I did  
22 in all five of my American Sign Language  
23 classes. It was then, that I realized, in  
24 order to continue growing and improving as an

1 interpreter, I needed to continually be  
2 interpreting.

3 "I wanted to become certified and it was  
4 not a feasible goal if I was only interpreting  
5 sporadic volunteer and religious events.  
6 According to how Act 57 is written, those were  
7 my only professional opportunities.

8 "From my experience, as well as many  
9 certified interpreters' experiences, it is  
10 impossible to become certified without  
11 real-life interpreting under your belt.  
12 Continuous exposure to a variety of  
13 interpreting situations is how one can build  
14 his or her skill to a level at which they can  
15 pass the test for certification. Ask any  
16 certified interpreter, here, today, or in  
17 general, how they got to where they are. Did  
18 they only do volunteer work? Did they build  
19 their skills simply by practicing in their  
20 spare time at home? Were they able to maintain  
21 full-time work in whatever job paid their bills  
22 while trying to pursue their career on the  
23 side? Their answer will be, no. They worked  
24 in the very same situations we are discussing



1       today without the certification that is  
2       presently required.

3               "Therefore, it is not only impossible to  
4       do what is recommended by Act 57, it is also  
5       somewhat hypocritical to ask.

6               "In order to advance my career, I knew I  
7       needed full time, real life exposure. I know  
8       many of my fellow graduates, current students  
9       and professionals in the field share the same  
10      views.

11              "I am aware that concern exists  
12      surrounding interpreters accepting assignments  
13      they may not have the skill set to perform, ie:  
14      medical situations.

15              "For me, this concern is not only  
16      unwarranted, but also personally offensive. As  
17      a trained professional, I, as well as all ITP  
18      students/graduates, are taught to adhere to a  
19      Code of Ethics.

20              "The same national organization, the  
21      Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, RID,  
22      that administers the test for certification  
23      also developed a Code of Professional Conduct  
24      that members must follow.

1            "We automatically assume that interpreters  
2 will comply with Tenet 4, which states,  
3 'Interpreters demonstrate respect for  
4 consumers,' [www.rid.org](http://www.rid.org).

5            "We should be as confident that  
6 interpreters will comply with Tenet 2, which  
7 states, 'Interpreters possess the professional  
8 skills and knowledge required for the specific  
9 interpreting situation,' [www.rid.org](http://www.rid.org).

10           "These Tenets, as well as the others  
11 stated in the RID Code of Professional Conduct,  
12 guide all my decisions related to this field.

13           "House Bill 1596, Section 5.1 (a)(2)(IV),  
14 which will require provisionally registered  
15 interpreters to pass an approved written  
16 examination, is crucial for ensuring all  
17 candidates will do the same.

18           "I passed the RID written examination in  
19 July of 2007. This examination tests our  
20 ethical decision making skills. It  
21 incorporates information that will test our  
22 knowledge concerning 10 tasks specifically set  
23 by RID.

24           "The first task addresses the

1       aforementioned concern. As per RID's Web site,  
2       task one for the written and performance test  
3       is to 'Assess each interpreting situation to  
4       determine if qualified for the assignment,'  
5       www.rid.org.

6                "Both the Code of Professional Conduct and  
7       passing the written portion of the RID  
8       certification test prove that interpreters,  
9       whether registered or provisionally registered,  
10      will accept assignments with the appropriate  
11      discretion.

12               "For me, leaving the state, though  
13      upsetting, was the appropriate and only choice  
14      I could make at the time. My skills have  
15      improved by means made impossible by Act 57. I  
16      work in a post-secondary environment where deaf  
17      and hard of hearing adults have requested my  
18      services by name.

19               "In Pennsylvania, they could also request  
20      my services, but how would they know to do so  
21      if they never even knew I existed?

22               "I have become a skilled interpreter that  
23      works in situations where I am qualified to  
24      interpret. I am not certified yet, but I am on

1 my way to becoming certified. This would not  
2 be possible if I did not have constant exposure  
3 and the ability to refine my skills daily.

4 "House Bill 1596 would make it feasible  
5 for current and future ITP graduates to achieve  
6 their goals of becoming certified while staying  
7 in the state of Pennsylvania. It would bring  
8 back interpreters the state lost due to the  
9 implementation of Act 57 in July 2005.

10 "I know that I would move back to  
11 Pennsylvania if the amendment passes.

12 "In the end, I believe the intent of the  
13 original act, as well as the professionals in  
14 our field, is to provide qualified (House Bill  
15 1596, Section 2, lines 31 through 36)  
16 interpreters who are, either, certified or  
17 actively plan to be certified.

18 "The rules that will govern both the state  
19 registration and the provisional registration  
20 ensure that the person interpreting out in the  
21 community will be one of the aforementioned  
22 individuals."

23 "MS. HURST: My name is Ramona Hurst and I  
24 am a senior American Sign Language/English

1 Interpretation major at Bloomsburg University.

2 "I am graduating in May and would like to

3 live and work in the state of Pennsylvania.

4 Due to the laws in the state of Pennsylvania,

5 Act 57, I would be unable to do so unless

6 registered with the state of Pennsylvania.

7 "As you are well aware, in order to

8 register with the state of Pennsylvania, one

9 must be certified by the National Interpreter

10 Certifying Organization, the Registry of

11 Interpreters for the Deaf, RID.

12 "Upon completion of the interpretation

13 program here at Bloomsburg University,

14 certification isn't expected, typically, until

15 three to five years after graduating. RID's

16 data, meaning, I would be unable to interpret

17 in the state of Pennsylvania, except for the

18 eight exceptions in Act 57.

19 "Even within the exceptions, the law is

20 very limiting to interpreters who have recently

21 graduated from interpreting training programs.

22 Bloomsburg University is one of the only

23 four-year programs in the state of Pennsylvania

24 as well as along the east coast.

1            "I find it disheartening that the state  
2 offers these programs, but doesn't foster laws  
3 that allow the interpreters to gain any  
4 experience to be able to become certified and  
5 transition fairly smoothly into the workforce.

6            "Many new interpreters have to go out of  
7 state to work due to the limitations of the  
8 law.

9            "Throughout my four years of study at  
10 Bloomsburg University, we've discussed what is  
11 morally and ethically right to do in varying  
12 situations. It's been talked about many times,  
13 but we are told that situations will arise that  
14 we will have to take what we've learned into  
15 careful consideration.

16           "We've talked about the importance of the  
17 Code of Professional Conduct, which are  
18 standards that interpreters certified by RID  
19 abide by in the everyday workplaces.

20           "One of the tenets that I feel is very key  
21 and very applicable since I'm a novice  
22 interpreter is Tenet 3, which, basically,  
23 states that interpreters should use discretion  
24 in what assignments they accept due to

1 emotional, physical or mental factors.

2 "As a student, I do have limitations and I  
3 need to know them in order to behave  
4 professionally. I am well aware of that. I  
5 also am aware that in order to work towards my  
6 certification, I can't sit around and wait for  
7 it to come to me. I need to take action and be  
8 interpreting, go to workshops to help me  
9 develop skills and so forth.

10 "I am planning to take the NIC written  
11 test this May.

12 "That being said, I ask that you would  
13 carefully consider this decision. House Bill  
14 1596 will greatly effect my future and the  
15 future of other students graduating from  
16 Interpreter Training Programs in the state of  
17 Pennsylvania affording us the opportunity to  
18 become certified and registered.

19 "Thank you for your time."

20 "MS. KUZYK: As a student in the  
21 Interpreter Training Program at Bloomsburg  
22 University, I would like to encourage passage  
23 of House Bill 1596. I am a senior,  
24 non-traditional student in this program. I am

1 a lifelong resident of Pennsylvania.

2 "That means I have vested interest in this  
3 bill. I want to be able to complete my  
4 practicum in the state in which I reside within  
5 a timely manner. Without House Bill 1596, I  
6 will not be able to do so.

7 "The Registry of Interpreters for the  
8 Deaf, RID, and the National Association of the  
9 Deaf, NAD, voted for the current Code of  
10 Professional Conduct, CPC, while I was in my  
11 freshman year at Bloomsburg.

12 "As students, we have been schooled in all  
13 aspects of the new code, most especially with  
14 regards to professionalism. Knowing when we  
15 are not qualified, comfortable or fluent in any  
16 given situation has been an emphasis in our  
17 education.

18 "CPC Tenet 2 requires interpreters use  
19 'discretion with regard to skill, communication  
20 mode, setting and consumer needs'.

21 "We have been taught the message is the  
22 most important component of a successful  
23 interpretation. Not being qualified to  
24 interpret in a given situation would skew the



1 message. Therefore, I would not accept an  
2 assignment for which I was not qualified.

3 "Tenet 3 of the CPC stipulates  
4 interpreters, 'presenting themselves  
5 appropriately in demeanor and appearance'.

6 "The knowledge passed on to us in our  
7 program has allowed us to decipher the meaning  
8 of 'demeanor and appearance'.

9 "Specifically, 3.2 of the CPC indicates if  
10 I am not able to perform my duties as an  
11 interpreter due to competency factors, either  
12 with my physical or mental health, then I must  
13 decline that assignment.

14 "The Interpreter Training Program at  
15 Bloomsburg University is a four-year bachelor  
16 of science degree program.

17 "In the four years at this university, I  
18 have been waiting to see if the state would  
19 improve upon Act 57 to welcome the newly  
20 graduated interpreter. Without House Bill  
21 1596, we are pushing new interpreters out of  
22 our state and preventing new out of state  
23 graduates from relocating to Pennsylvania.

24 "House Bill 1596 will allow new graduates

1 of Interpreter Training Programs to work in  
2 varied environments here in Pennsylvania under  
3 the watchful eye of a mentor. Upon completion  
4 of their practicum, it will offer them the  
5 opportunity to hone their skills, excluding  
6 mental health and legal settings.

7 "Currently, Pennsylvania law limits how I  
8 can complete my practicum. Therefore, I am  
9 currently seeking a practicum outside the  
10 Commonwealth in order to complete this phase of  
11 my education in the time allotted by my  
12 program.

13 "Thank you for your efforts on behalf of  
14 House Bill 1596. Your cooperation and  
15 consideration are greatly appreciated."

16 "MS. NELSON: As a deaf consumer of the  
17 interpreting service in the state of  
18 Pennsylvania, I agree with the premise behind  
19 the proposed amendment to House Bill 1596.

20 "I, and the deaf community, have been  
21 fighting to improve the quality of interpreting  
22 which was mediocre for many years. And the  
23 license route was the only and best way we  
24 could use to rectify the situation and bring in

1 quality in the Commonwealth.

2 "I was honestly dismayed with the original  
3 version of House Bill 1596 because it weakened  
4 what we fought hard for. There has been a lot  
5 of harm done by unqualified interpreters before  
6 the license law was implemented.

7 "I agree there needs to be a provision to  
8 enable a 'new' interpreter who just completed a  
9 training program. There must be parameters as  
10 to what assignments an inexperienced  
11 interpreter can handle. I do not want to see  
12 them in any life altering situations where  
13 full, accurate and clear communication is  
14 needed. The proposed amendment solves my  
15 dilemma.

16 "I have worked with many student  
17 interpreters doing their practicum interpreting  
18 on/for me over the last 25 years at Rosemont  
19 College's faculty meetings. I have seen all  
20 different levels of skills from the student  
21 interpreter coming out of those programs and  
22 have given feedbacks and ASL signs for concepts  
23 they did not know or whatever.

24 "Most common problem is weakness in

1 'spoken' vocabulary and even more so in ASL  
2 sign vocabulary.

3 "To give you an example, in academic  
4 setting, the word 'discipline' comes up very  
5 often. It means a specific subject/study field  
6 or track, and the interpreter would very often  
7 erroneously sign 'punishment' or 'control'  
8 (here is where I give feedback and most job  
9 situations do not have this).

10 "They need to go out in the real world  
11 with this provisional license and perform with  
12 some supervision. And with this, they will get  
13 feedback and learn from it and broaden their  
14 vocabulary, both spoken and ASL sign, thus  
15 become better for it. Also, learn how to deal  
16 with various situations on the 'job'; not all  
17 are ideal and pleasant.

18 "I hope ODHH will be given the discretion  
19 of monitoring this situation and have the  
20 authority to modify requirements as needed to  
21 maintain quality. A neutral evaluation of the  
22 provisional licensee should be by ODHH or IID,  
23 not by the training program that trained that  
24 person or by the people that hires the

1 interpreter.

2 "I do want to see ODHH in control of this  
3 provisional license program. Reason being that  
4 its staff is in close contact with  
5 stakeholders, interpreters, deaf community,  
6 educators involved with PA TRS, ERCHL, et  
7 cetera. They are most qualified to modify  
8 requirements as needed to maintain quality.

9 "So, more funding is needed to hire  
10 necessary staff to monitor the provisional  
11 license program. They have had no budgetary  
12 increases for several years despite increases  
13 in cost of living as well as increases in  
14 demand for services. If they are to be asked  
15 to assume more responsibility and authority to  
16 monitor various circumstances effecting the  
17 quality of life of the Commonwealth's deaf and  
18 hard of hearing people, then funding needs to  
19 be allocated to do the job. Otherwise, who  
20 will enforce the regulations; work with  
21 establishments to improve interpreting  
22 services; maintain a list of certified  
23 interpreters, et cetera?

24 "There are many more interpreters in the

1 state who feels for, whatever reason, they do  
2 not need license to work. I hope they find it  
3 more difficult to find interpreting assignments  
4 due to not being on the licensed list. The  
5 current shortage of qualified interpreters  
6 should lessen over time. Please give the law  
7 time to work.

8 "Thank you for allowing me to comment on  
9 House Bill 1596.

10 "If possible, I would like to have a copy  
11 of the proceedings of this meeting."

12 "MS. STONER: My name is Marci Stoner and  
13 I am an American Sign Language Interpreter that  
14 is currently working in Pennsylvania. I have a  
15 bachelors degree in American Sign  
16 Language/English Interpreting from Bloomsburg  
17 University that I received in August of 2007.  
18 I also have a passing score for the National  
19 Interpreter Certification (NIC) written test.  
20 Both documents prove how skilled I am as an  
21 interpret.

22 "I do understand and respect the meaning  
23 behind Act 57. At the same time, with the  
24 skill that I have acquired, I feel as though

1 Act 57 is holding me back from reaching my  
2 fullest potential. Therefore, I am in support  
3 of House Bill 1596 so my skill will advance.

4 "I have followed the Registry of  
5 Interpreters for the Deaf, RID, Code of  
6 Professional Conduct, CPC, previously known as  
7 the Code of Ethics since I was taught about it  
8 in college. The second tenet of the CPC is  
9 about professionalism.

10 "In my Interpreter Training Program, ITP,  
11 I have learned about professionalism at its  
12 best. I've learned which place is best for the  
13 interpreter to sit or stand, so that the  
14 consumer can see them clearly. I have also  
15 learned and understood when to decline the  
16 assignment because I may not have enough  
17 experience. Experience is something that takes  
18 time to acquire.

19 "Currently, Pennsylvania has restrictions  
20 on what interpreting situations I may have  
21 access to, therefore, my experience is limited.

22 "By passing House Bill 1596, I feel that  
23 by interpreting in a variety of situations,  
24 business, medical, et cetera, my

1 professionalism, as well as the understanding,  
2 this evolving language will only improve.

3 "Under the Code of Professional Conduct  
4 where it lists, Applicability, Section A, it  
5 states that the CPC applies to both certified  
6 and associate members of the Registry of  
7 Interpreters for the Deaf. An associate member  
8 is one who interprets, but is not yet  
9 certified.

10 "I, as well as other interpreters in this  
11 state, have credentials for their skills, such  
12 as an associates or bachelors degree and  
13 passing score on the NIC written test. And by  
14 being members of RID, we are required to do our  
15 best to follow the Code of Professional  
16 Conduct.

17 "With these credentials, we are qualified  
18 to work with different assignments than what  
19 Act 57 has limited us to.

20 "I, as well as other interpreters, will  
21 keep information confidential, make ethical  
22 decisions and continue to become more  
23 knowledgeable of the profession as time goes  
24 on.



1           "By passing Pennsylvania House Bill 1596  
2           to allow non-certified interpreters to register  
3           provisionally until certified, will open the  
4           doors to many adequate interpreters. If this  
5           mission is successful, instead of providing  
6           service to another state, I will plan to stay  
7           in my home state of Pennsylvania and give back  
8           to the Commonwealth. Through the competence  
9           that I have with the interpreting profession, I  
10          will provide the best I can to the deaf  
11          community."

12           "MS. ZIMMERMAN: My name is Amanda  
13          Zimmerman and I am a senior at Bloomsburg  
14          University in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania.

15           "I am majoring in American Sign  
16          Language/English Interpreting, and in August of  
17          2008, I will graduate with a bachelor's of  
18          science.

19           "I am contacting you with regards to the  
20          House Bill 1596. This bill effects me greatly  
21          as a soon to be working interpreter in the  
22          state of Pennsylvania.

23           "Within my Interpreter Training Program  
24          here at Bloomsburg, we have learned in great

1 depth the Code of Professional Conduct and I  
2 will adhere to it as a professional interpreter  
3 citing Tenet 2.0, 'Interpreters possess the  
4 professional skills and knowledge required for  
5 the specific interpreting situation,' 3.0,  
6 'Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner  
7 appropriate to the specific interpreting  
8 situation,' and in particular 3.2, 'Decline  
9 assignments or withdraw from the interpreting  
10 profession when not competent due to physical,  
11 mental or emotional factors,' rid.org.

12 "I am also planning to take the NIC  
13 written test this coming spring and this will  
14 test me on ethics of the Code of Professional  
15 Conduct and also the 3.2 Tenet.

16 "I strongly encourage you to pass the  
17 House Bill 1596 this year.

18 "Thank you for your time and have a nice  
19 day."

20 (Whereupon, the proceedings  
21 concluded at approximately 12:10  
22 p.m.)

23

24

## 1                   C E R T I F I C A T E

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3                   I, RENEE HELMAR, a Shorthand Reporter, and Notary  
4 Public, certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate  
5 transcript of the proceedings which were held at the time,  
6 place and on the date herein before set forth.

7                   I further certify that I am neither attorney, nor  
8 counsel for, nor related to or employed by, any of the  
9 parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken,  
10 and further that I am not a relative or employee of any  
11 attorney or counsel employed in this action, nor am I  
12 financially interested in this case.

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Renee Helmar

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Shorthand Reporter

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