

President
Teri Hedding



Vice-President
Amanda Grazian

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The Honorable Bruce Rauner, Governor
207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Treasurer
Suzanne Salerno

November 10, 2017

Dear Governor Rauner,

Secretary
Sara Lucas

The Illinois Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (IRID) is writing this letter in response to the Senate Resolution (SR 0528), particularly the section where the Senators recommended the move of the Illinois Interpreter Licensure Law of 2007 from Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission to Illinois Finances and Professional Regulations (IDFPR).

Member-At-Large
Cathy Silvern

The mission statement of IRID, a state chapter of a national association (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or RID), is to promote the interpreting profession statewide as we serve people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind. We strive to advocate for best practices in interpreting and to encourage the highest standards in the provision of interpreting services. We are concerned how the move of the interpreter licensure law to IDFPR can potentially impact Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind constituents and how our profession will be regulated.

Member-At-Large
Mary Kocsis

We understand that your office needs to make recommendations to the Senate by January 1, 2018. Respectfully, we are asking your office to host community forums where more than 650 licensed interpreters throughout Illinois can ask questions and share concerns regarding this proposed change .

Member-At-Large
Olivia Heitz

The Chicago area and many other communities throughout the State of Illinois are experiencing an unprecedented need and demand for professional interpreters by Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind consumers to meet legal requirements for services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In healthcare, legal, education, social services and many other needs, Interpreters and interpreter referral agencies are falling far behind their ability to meet these increasing demands. Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind constituents are being told they must postpone appointments, go without interpreter services entirely, wait in Emergency Rooms for hours until an interpreter can arrive on site. Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind students are attending classes without interpreters despite

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having IEPs or other legally binding documents on file requiring these services. These are just some of the challenges facing the interpreting profession at this time.

IRID's members and professionals throughout the State of Illinois have a number of critical questions about the proposed changes in SR 0528, including (but not limited to):

- Will IDFPR staff have the cultural competence to mediate the issues that impact the interpreting profession and/or the Deaf community?
- Considering that we are a relatively small number of professionals compared to other professional groups such as audiologists and social workers, will IDFPR staff be able to devote time to address interpreting-related concerns, questions, or complaints?
- Will the IDFPR be able to provide affordable training opportunities and continuing education programs for interpreters?
- Will the IDFPR be monitoring and processing the interpreters' continuing education requirements?
- Will the IDFPR be able to provide licensing examinations equivalent to the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) or other equivalent testing - which the IDHHC currently provides?
- Will the interpreters' licensure fees increase, decrease or remain the same if the move to IDFPR occurs ?
- Will the IDFPR conduct a salary/compensation research initiative to determine whether Illinois is paying wages commensurate with other States and consider pay scale discrepancies as requested by IRID membership?
- Will the IDFPR monitor the practices of all interpreter referral agencies in the State of Illinois to ensure fair and appropriate policies are instituted and followed?

IRID would greatly appreciate knowing whether these and other questions can be addressed in a series of community forums throughout the State of Illinois before your office issues a position statement on SR 0528.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns. We look forward to receiving your response in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

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www.irid.org

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Ms. Teri Hedding, President
Ms. Amanda Grazian, Vice President
Ms. Suzanne Salerno, Treasurer
Ms. Sara Lucas, Secretary
Ms. Cathy Silvern, Member at Large
Ms. Mary Kocsis, Member at Large
Ms. Olivia Heitz, Member at Large
Mr. Mark McWilliams, Student Interpreter Representative

CC: Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

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