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LC01572  
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# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2006

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS – INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF

Introduced By: Senators Gibbs, Blais, and Breene

Date Introduced: February 14, 2006

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 5-71-2, 5-71-3, 5-71-5, 5-71-8, 5-71-9, 5-71-10, 5-71-13 and 5-71-  
2   15 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-71 entitled "Interpreters for the Deaf" are hereby amended to  
3   read as follows:

4           **5-71-2. Declaration of policy and statement of purpose.** -- (a) It is declared the policy  
5   of the state that the practice of interpreting and the practice of transliterating affects, including,  
6   but not limited to, the public health, safety, welfare, civic, economic, social, academic and  
7   recreational aspects of life, and shall be subject to licensure and regulation in the public's interest.

8   It is further declared that:

9           (1) Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or other individuals with disabilities ~~who~~  
10 ~~use special communication techniques in order to communicate and individuals~~ whose primary  
11 language is sign language have a civil right to effective communication;

12           (2) Consumers and those with whom they communicate require and are entitled to  
13 competent, reliable interpreting services, and that the availability of competent, reliable,  
14 credentialed interpreting services are necessary for consumers to realize their right to full and  
15 equal participation in society.

16           (b) A purpose of this chapter is to provide minimum qualifications for interpreters and to  
17 ensure the health, safety and welfare of the public ~~that members of the interpreting profession~~  
18 ~~perform with a high degree of competency.~~

19           **5-71-3. Definitions.** -- (1) "Board" means the state board of examiners for interpreters for

1 the deaf.

2 (2) "Certified" means any person who is a certified member of the Registry of  
3 Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID), its successor agency or other agencies as approved by the  
4 department in consultation with the board.

5 ~~(2)~~ (3) "Consumer" is an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing or other individual with  
6 disabilities ~~who use special communication techniques in order to communicate, and individuals~~  
7 whose primary language is sign language (e.g., American Sign Language, manually coded sign  
8 systems).

9 (4) "Department" means the Rhode Island department of health.

10 ~~(3)~~ (5) "Director" means the director of the department of health.

11 (6) "'Emergency" means an urgent circumstance that demands immediate action in order  
12 for a consumer to avoid imminent harm or loss.

13 (a) In the event of an emergency, the consumer may elect to use the services of a  
14 nonlicensed interpreter or transliterator as set forth in regulations promulgated by the department.

15 ~~(4)~~ (7) "Interpreter for the deaf" means any person who engages in the practice of  
16 interpreting ~~or transliterating~~ for the deaf as defined in ~~subdivisions (6) and (8) of this section~~  
17 subsection (9) below.

18 ~~(5)~~ (8) "Interpreter trainee" and "interpreter student" means any person, meeting the  
19 minimum requirements established by the ~~state board of examiners for interpreting for the deaf~~  
20 department in consultation with the board who is currently enrolled in a ~~recognized~~ nationally  
21 accredited interpreter training program and participating in the practicum portion of their studies.

22 ~~(6)~~ ~~(i)~~ (9) "Interpreting for the deaf" means ~~interpreting~~ conveying spoken English into  
23 American Sign Language (ASL) (voice-to-sign) or ~~interpreting~~ conveying American Sign  
24 Language into English (sign-to-voice), or interpreting English to and/or from a visual gestural  
25 system. Such practice shall not included transliterating for the deaf.

26 ~~(ii) Any application that is represented to the public by title or by description of services,~~  
27 ~~methods, or procedures for facilitating communication between a signing and a non-signing~~  
28 ~~person is considered the practice of interpreting for the deaf. A practice is deemed the "practice of~~  
29 ~~interpreting for the deaf" if services are offered under any title, similar titles, or description of~~  
30 ~~services incorporating the words "interpreter for the deaf", "signer", "ASL (American Sign~~  
31 ~~Language) interpreter", or any similar titles or descriptions of services.~~

32 ~~(7) "Special licenses" means any specialized means of communicating with persons~~  
33 ~~using sign language or non-sign language systems and includes: "tactile communication" (such as~~  
34 ~~is used by deaf blind persons), "cued speech" (an oral method utilizing hand cues for visually~~

1 ~~similar phonemes), "oral interpreting" (which is non manual and relies on speech and speech~~  
2 ~~reading), or other specialized communication modalities utilized with deaf persons.~~

3 (10) "Screened interpreter or transliterator for the deaf" means any person who presents  
4 proof of an active state screening or its equivalent and presents proof of successful completion of  
5 an examination as approved by the department in consultation with the board.

6 (11) "Transliterator for the deaf" means any person who engages in the practice of  
7 transliterating for the deaf as defined in subsection (12) below.

8 ~~(8) (12) "Transliterating for the deaf" means transliterating conveying spoken English~~  
9 ~~into Manually coded English (voice-to-sign) such as Pidgin Signed English, or transliterating~~  
10 ~~conveying manually coded English into spoken English (sign-to-voice), or transliterating~~  
11 ~~conveying English ~~to and or from a non manual communication system such as cued speech on~~ on~~  
12 ~~the lips so that it is accessible to speech reading (i.e. oral transliterating). ~~Any application that is~~~~  
13 ~~~~represented to the public by title or by description of services, methods, or procedures for~~~~  
14 ~~~~facilitating communication between signing and nonsigning person is considered the practice of~~~~  
15 ~~~~interpreting for the deaf. A practice is deemed the "practice of interpreting for the deaf" if~~~~  
16 ~~~~services are offered under any title, similar titles, or description of services incorporating the~~~~  
17 ~~~~words "interpreter for the deaf", "signer", "ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter", or any~~~~  
18 ~~~~similar titles or descriptions of services.~~ Such practice shall not include interpreting for the deaf.~~

19 **5-71-5. Board of examiners -- Duties and powers -- Meetings -- Compensation of**  
20 **members.** -- (a) The department with the assistance of the board shall administer, coordinate and  
21 enforce the provisions of this chapter, evaluate the qualifications of applicants, and may issue  
22 subpoenas, examine witnesses, and administer oaths, and investigate persons engaging in  
23 practices which violate the provisions of this chapter.

24 (b) The ~~board~~ department shall conduct hearings and shall keep records and minutes that  
25 are necessary for the orderly dispatch of business.

26 (c) The ~~board~~ department shall hold public hearings regarding rules and regulations.

27 (d) The department in consultation with the board, ~~with the approval of the director of~~  
28 ~~the department of health,~~ in accordance with the rule-making provisions of the Administrative  
29 Procedures Act, chapter 35 of title 42, shall adopt responsible rules and regulations, and may  
30 amend or repeal those rules and regulations. Following their adoption, the rules and regulations  
31 shall govern and control the professional conduct of every person who holds a license to practice  
32 interpreting or transliterating for the deaf in the state of Rhode Island. ~~Rules and regulations shall~~  
33 ~~be kept on file within the department of health, division of licensure and regulation, and shall be~~  
34 ~~available for public inspection.~~

1 ~~-(e) The examination instrument used for testing shall not be available for public~~  
2 ~~inspection and may be changed as the board deems necessary.~~

3 ~~-(f) Every licensed interpreter for the deaf, upon commencing to practice, shall~~  
4 ~~immediately notify the board of his or her address or addresses. Every licensed interpreter for the~~  
5 ~~deaf practicing as previously stated, before July first, shall annually pay to the department of~~  
6 ~~health a license fee which does not exceed thirty seven dollars and fifty cents (\$37.50)~~  
7 ~~commencing in January, 1998. Each licensed interpreter for the deaf shall promptly notify the~~  
8 ~~board of any change in his or her office address or addresses, and shall furnish any other~~  
9 ~~information to the board that it may require. The board may suspend the authority of any licensed~~  
10 ~~interpreter for the deaf to practice for failure to comply with any of the above requirements. The~~  
11 ~~board shall make available for public inspection, a complete list of the names of all interpreters~~  
12 ~~for the deaf licensed and practicing in the state, arranged alphabetically by name.~~

13 ~~(g)~~ (e) Regular meetings of the board shall be held ~~at the time and places that it~~  
14 ~~prescribes~~, and special meetings may be held upon the call of the chairperson as necessary to deal  
15 with such issues as violations of this chapter; provided, that at least one regular meeting is held  
16 each calendar year.

17 ~~-(h) The board shall have its first meeting on or before December 31, 1996, and shall~~  
18 ~~have its rules and regulations, and written examination adopted no later than December 31, 1997.~~  
19 ~~Licensure and examinations shall commence after January 1, 1998.~~

20 ~~(i)~~ (f) The conferral or enumeration of specific powers in this chapter shall not be  
21 construed as a limitation of the general powers conferred by the section. No member of the board  
22 shall be liable to civil action for any act performed in good faith in the performance of his or her  
23 duties as prescribed by this chapter.

24 ~~(j)~~ (g) Board members shall serve on an honorable basis without compensation.

25 ~~(k)~~ (h) The board may request legal advice and assistance from the appropriate legal  
26 officer.

27 **5-71-8. Qualifications of applicants for licenses. --** To be eligible for licensure by the  
28 board as an interpreter or transliterator for the deaf, the applicant must submit written evidence on  
29 forms furnished by the department, verified by oath, that the applicant meets all of the following  
30 requirements:

31 ~~(1) Submit an application indicating interpreting or transliterating experience, together~~  
32 ~~with an application fee of thirty seven dollars and fifty cents (\$37.50) Is of good moral character;~~  
33 and

34 ~~(2) Submit three (3) letters of recommendation, at least two (2) of which shall be from~~

1 ~~consumers attesting to the person's ethical behavior, and skills as they relate to interpreting or~~  
2 ~~translating for the deaf; and~~ Meets the certification or screened requirements as defined in  
3 regulations promulgated by the department.

4 ~~-(3) Submit written verification of successful completion of the National Registry of~~  
5 ~~Interpreters for the Deaf evaluation, or successful completion of a recognized state screening or~~  
6 ~~state equivalent within the United States; and~~

7 ~~-(4) Present evidence of completion of course work in American Sign Language, deaf~~  
8 ~~culture, and the code of ethics. The course work may be completed as part of an interpreter~~  
9 ~~training program, or through individual workshops sponsored by a recognized organization or~~  
10 ~~agency or other training recognized by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf; or~~

11 ~~-(5) The board shall review each applicant as to his or her qualifications for the practice~~  
12 ~~of interpreting or transliterating for the deaf. Interpreters and or transliterators who do not present~~  
13 ~~evidence of completion of coursework in American Sign Language, deaf culture and the code of~~  
14 ~~ethics, or who do not present evidence of successful completion of the National Registry of~~  
15 ~~Interpreters for the Deaf generalist written examination, shall be required to complete a written~~  
16 ~~examination. The examination shall be devised or approved by the board, and shall include the~~  
17 ~~areas containing categories of information on which the candidate shall be tested:~~

18 ~~-(i) Area A shall contain information that is concerned with American Sign Language.~~  
19 ~~Separate examinations shall be given for interpreting and transliterating in area A. The~~  
20 ~~examination in area A shall be concerned with material related to: (A) psychological and~~  
21 ~~sociological aspects of language use; (B) language use, and non language systems which are~~  
22 ~~manually coded; (C) grammatical and psycholinguistic application of sign usage, and other~~  
23 ~~related linguistic information the board shall deem necessary.~~

24 ~~-(ii) Area B shall contain information that is concerned with deaf culture. The~~  
25 ~~examination in area B shall be concerned with material related to: (A) the influence of~~  
26 ~~educational experience and language; (B) cultural norms and mores; (C) psychological and~~  
27 ~~sociological aspects of culture in the deaf community, and other related material the board shall~~  
28 ~~deem necessary.~~

29 ~~-(iii) Area C shall contain fields of information that are concerned with the code of ethics.~~  
30 ~~The examination in area C shall be concerned with material related to: (A) the code of ethics for~~  
31 ~~interpreters as established by the national registry of interpreters for the deaf; (B) the application~~  
32 ~~of the code of ethics in the provision of interpreting or transliterating services, and other related~~  
33 ~~ethics information the board shall deem necessary.~~

34 **5-71-9. Licensure and regulations of interpreters for the deaf.** -- (a) Licensure shall be

1 granted in either transliterating ~~and~~ or interpreting independently. A person may be licensed in  
2 both areas if he or she is qualified as defined in section 5-71-8.

3 (b) No person shall practice or holds him or herself out as being able to practice  
4 interpreting or transliterating for the deaf as defined in section 5-71-3 unless he or she shall be  
5 licensed in accordance with the provisions of the laws of this chapter.

6 (c) Each licensed interpreter for the deaf upon commencing to practice, and upon any  
7 change in address shall promptly notify the department of said change in home or office address,  
8 and shall furnish any other information to the department that it may require. Every licensed  
9 interpreter for the deaf shall annually, before July 1<sup>st</sup> pay the department a license renewal fee,  
10 that does not exceed thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$37.50). The department may suspend  
11 the authority of any licensed interpreter for the deaf to practice for failure to comply with any of  
12 the requirements of this chapter or the regulations promulgated thereunder. The department  
13 makes available for public inspection, a complete list of the names of all interpreters for the deaf  
14 licensed and practicing in the state.

15 ~~(e)~~ (d) Three ~~levels~~ types of licensure ~~shall be granted~~ may be issued to interpreters and  
16 or transliterators for the deaf:

17 (1) A certified license shall be granted to interpreters or transliterators who have met the  
18 certification requirements ~~of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and are currently~~  
19 ~~certified.~~ as set forth in regulations promulgated by the department.

20 (2) A screened license shall be granted to interpreters who have met the educational  
21 requirements as ~~defined in this chapter~~ set forth in regulations promulgated by the department,  
22 and who have successfully completed a recognized state screening or state equivalent as  
23 determined by the department in consultation with the board.

24 (3) A temporary (student) license shall be granted to persons who are currently enrolled  
25 in ~~a recognized~~ an accredited interpreter training program to practice interpreting and  
26 transliterating. Persons who receive the temporary license shall be supervised by the interpreter  
27 training program. The licensure is only valid while the person is enrolled as a student in the  
28 program and supervised by a nationally certified interpreter.

29 ~~(4) The distinction between certified licenses, registered licenses, and licenses shall be~~  
30 ~~for the purpose of identifying to the public which interpreters hold a certification from the~~  
31 ~~National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. This chapter does not impose any limits on the~~  
32 ~~practice of certified licensees, registered licensees, or licensees.~~

33 ~~(e)~~ (e) All licensed interpreters shall be required to complete continuing education, as  
34 ~~prescribed by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's certification maintenance~~

1 ~~program. The board of examiners may approve alternate courses as substitutes for the continuing~~  
2 ~~education units in order to maintain licensure~~ set forth in regulations promulgated by the  
3 department.

4 **5-71-10. Reciprocity. – Endorsement.** -- The department in consultation with the board  
5 ~~recommends~~ shall promulgate regulations providing for a procedure for waiver of the  
6 requirements of section 5-71-9 for applicants who hold a valid license, certificate, or equivalent  
7 issued within another state; provided, that the requirements under which that license, certificate,  
8 or equivalent was issued, meet or exceed the standards required by this chapter ~~with the approval~~  
9 ~~of the director.~~

10 **5-71-13. Grounds for suspension or revocation of licenses.** -- The board may  
11 recommend to the director of the department of health the issuance, renewal, or revocation of a  
12 license, or suspension, placement on probation, censure or reprimand a licensee, or any other  
13 disciplinary action that the board may deem appropriate, for conduct that may result from, but not  
14 necessarily be limited to:

15 (1) Obtaining his or her license by means of fraud, misrepresentation, or concealment of  
16 material facts;

17 (2) Being guilty of fraud, misrepresentation, concealment or material misstatement of  
18 facts or deceit in connection with his or her services rendered as an interpreter or transliterator for  
19 the deaf;

20 (3) Being guilty of unprofessional conduct as defined by the rules established by the  
21 department in consultation with the board, and/or has violated any standard of professional or  
22 ethical conduct adopted by the National registry of Interpreters for the deaf;

23 (4) Violating the continuing education requirements of this chapter as defined in section  
24 5-71-9(d);

25 (5) Violating any lawful order, or any provision of this chapter or of the rules or  
26 regulations promulgated in this chapter;

27 (6) Aiding or assisting another person in violating any provision of this chapter or any  
28 rule or regulation adopted under this chapter;

29 (7) Departure from or failure to conform to the current standards of acceptable and  
30 prevailing practice of interpreting for the deaf.

31 **5-71-15. Persons and practices exempted.** -- The provisions of this chapter do not apply  
32 to:

33 ~~(1) A qualified person licensed in this state under any other law engaging in the~~  
34 ~~profession or business for which he or she is licensed.~~

- 1           ~~(2)~~ (1) Any person working as an interpreter or a transliterator in court.
- 2           ~~(3)~~ (2) Interpreters or transliterators performing as volunteers without compensation.
- 3           ~~(4)~~ (3) Interpreters or transliterators performing in an emergency as defined in subsection  
4 5-71-3(6) and as set forth in regulations promulgated by the department. ~~Emergency~~  
5 ~~circumstances are circumstances in which the consumer decides the delay necessary to obtain a~~  
6 ~~licensed interpreter is likely to cause injury or loss to the consumer.~~
- 7           (4) Nonlicensed individuals who are certified members of the Registry of Interpreters for  
8 the Deaf, Inc., (RID) its successor agency or other agency as approved by the department in  
9 consultation with the board, who may provide services for a maximum of twenty-five (25) hours  
10 per calendar year.

11           SECTION 2. Chapter 5-71 of the General Laws entitled "Interpreters for the Deaf" is  
12 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

13           **5-71-18. Privileged communications.** – In the trial of every cause, both civil and  
14 criminal, no licensed interpreter for the deaf shall be competent to testify concerning any  
15 statement made to him or her in connection with the interpreter's interpretation or transliteration  
16 for the deaf, without the consent of the person making the statement. No duly licensed interpreter  
17 for the deaf shall be allowed, in giving testimony to disclose any confidential communication,  
18 properly entrusted to him or her in his or her professional capacity, and necessary and proper to  
19 enable him or her to discharge the functions of his or her office in the usual course of practice or  
20 discipline, without the consent of the person making the communication.

21           SECTION 3. Sections 5-71-11, 5-71-12 and 5-71-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-71  
22 entitled "Interpreters for the Deaf" are hereby repealed.

23           ~~**5-71-11. National certification in lieu of course work -- Special licenses.**~~ -- (a) The  
24 ~~board shall accept current and valid certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the~~  
25 ~~Deaf in lieu of the course work, written examination and screening or quality assurance testing.~~  
26 ~~Interpreters or transliterators with the certification shall be granted certified licenses as an~~  
27 ~~interpreter and/or transliterator for the deaf.~~

28           ~~(b) Special licenses may be sought by persons dealing with specific communication~~  
29 ~~modalities associated with the practice of interpreting or transliterating, as defined in section 5-~~  
30 ~~71-3. The board may provide a special limited license for this practice of interpreting or~~  
31 ~~transliterating to those claiming specific expertise in tactile communication, non sign modalities~~  
32 ~~such as cued speech, or oral interpreting. The special licenses shall only be granted until the time~~  
33 ~~that formal, generally recognized as evaluative methods for these modalities are instituted. Those~~  
34 ~~special licenses shall state the limitations as to the specific modality for which the licensee claims~~

1 ~~expertise. Those licenses shall come under the general terms of the laws and regulations created~~  
2 ~~by this chapter, except for the educational and evaluation section, but shall not be required to~~  
3 ~~demonstrate any knowledge or expertise in any other communication modality other than that~~  
4 ~~which they claim as an area of specialty. The board shall establish separate educational~~  
5 ~~requirements for specific modalities to assess the validity of the expertise claimed by the~~  
6 ~~specialist.~~

7 ~~(c) Students who are enrolled in interpreter training programs shall apply for a temporary~~  
8 ~~license which shall be valid while enrolled and practicing under the auspices of an interpreter~~  
9 ~~training program recognized by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.~~

10 ~~**5-71-12. Grandparent licensing.** --- (a) The first licenses granted by the board shall~~  
11 ~~provide a specific period for experienced interpreters or transliterators who do not meet the~~  
12 ~~evaluation or educational requirements, but have five (5) years of experience interpreting and or~~  
13 ~~transliterating. "Experience" means a minimum of two hundred (200) hours of interpreting per~~  
14 ~~year. These persons shall be granted a registered license. These interpreters shall not be required~~  
15 ~~to complete the written examination, which is waived for these interpreters, but must participate~~  
16 ~~in the continuing education required for all licensed interpreters under this chapter. This~~  
17 ~~registered license shall be valid for three (3) years and six (6) months, enabling the person to meet~~  
18 ~~the requirements for licensure. At the end of this period, he or she must meet the evaluation~~  
19 ~~requirements (i.e., certification or screening) established by this chapter and the board to obtain~~  
20 ~~licensure.~~

21 ~~(b) Persons meeting the qualifications requirements as defined in this chapter, and who~~  
22 ~~have written verification of passing a state screening or state equivalent, but who have not~~  
23 ~~successfully passed the written and performance evaluation of the National Registry of~~  
24 ~~Interpreters for the Deaf shall be granted the license.~~

25 ~~(c) The provisions of this section apply to persons working as interpreters in elementary~~  
26 ~~or secondary education classrooms who meet the requirements of this section.~~

27 ~~**5-71-14. Revocation and suspension procedure -- Appeals from initial and**~~  
28 ~~**reinstatement decisions.** --- (a) Notice, in writing, of a contemplated revocation or suspension of~~  
29 ~~a license, of the particular cause, and of the date of a hearing, shall be sent by registered or~~  
30 ~~certified mail to the licensee at his or her last known address at least fifteen (15) days before the~~  
31 ~~date of the hearing. The individual against whom a charge is filed shall have a right to appear~~  
32 ~~before the board in person or by counsel, or both, may produce witnesses and evidence on his or~~  
33 ~~her behalf, and may question witnesses. No license shall be revoked or suspended without a~~  
34 ~~hearing, but the non appearance of the licensee, after notice, shall not prevent a hearing. All~~

1 ~~matters upon which the decision is based shall be introduced in evidence at the proceeding. The~~  
2 ~~licensee shall be notified, in writing, of the board's decision within ninety (90) days after the~~  
3 ~~hearing. The board, on a case by case basis for good cause shown, in writing, may extend the time~~  
4 ~~for issuing its decision an additional ninety (90) days. The board may make any rules and~~  
5 ~~regulations that it deems proper for the filing of charges and the conduct of hearings.~~

6 ~~(b) After issuing an order of revocation or suspension, the board may also file a petition~~  
7 ~~in equity in the superior court in a county in which the respondent resides or transacts business, to~~  
8 ~~ensure appropriate injunctive relief to expedite and secure the enforcement of its order, pending~~  
9 ~~the final determination.~~

10 ~~(c) An application for reinstatement may be made to the board, which may, upon the~~  
11 ~~affirmative vote of at least the majority of its members, grant a reinstatement.~~

12 ~~(d) An applicant for an initial license, which has been denied, has the right to request a~~  
13 ~~hearing. The board's decision shall be in writing within ninety (90) days after the hearing and~~  
14 ~~shall be based on evidence in the record.~~

15 ~~(e) The director may temporarily suspend a license without a hearing for a period not to~~  
16 ~~exceed thirty (30) days upon notice to the licensee, following a finding by the board, adopted by~~  
17 ~~the director, that there exists a significant threat to the public safety.~~

18 ~~(f) An applicant for reinstatement who has been denied reinstatement, has the right to~~  
19 ~~request a hearing. The board's decision shall be in writing within ninety (90) days after the~~  
20 ~~hearing and shall be based on evidence in the record.~~

21 ~~(g) Any appeal from the action of the board shall be in accordance with the provisions of~~  
22 ~~chapter 35 of title 42.~~

23 SECTION 4. Section 23-1.8-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-1.8 entitled  
24 "Commission on the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing" is hereby amended to read as follows:

25 **23-1.8-2. Duties -- Activities.** -- The commission shall be primarily a coordinating and  
26 advocating body, acting on behalf of the special concerns of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in  
27 Rhode Island. Its activities shall be independent of any existing agency or department within the  
28 state. The commission shall be accountable directly to the executive office of the state, and shall  
29 submit an annual report to the governor. The commission will assume the following duties:

- 30 (1) Bring about greater cooperation and coordination among agencies and organizations  
31 now servicing or having the potential to serve the deaf and hard-of-hearing;
- 32 (2) Promote greater accessibility to services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing;
- 33 (3) Conduct an ongoing needs assessment;
- 34 (4) Promote increased awareness and provide information and referrals;

1 (5) Advocate for the enactment of legislation that would assist the needs of individuals  
2 who are deaf and hard-of-hearing;

3 (6) Administer a sign language interpreter referral service;

4 (7) Take necessary action to improve the quality of life for deaf and hard-of-hearing  
5 individuals living in Rhode Island;

6 (8) Develop a statewide coordinating council that will coordinate the implementation of  
7 the comprehensive statewide strategic plan for children in Rhode Island who are deaf or have  
8 hearing loss. The composition, functions and activities of the statewide coordinating council shall  
9 be consistent with the provisions of the strategic plan developed through the Rhode Island  
10 department of elementary and secondary education.

11 [\(9\) Track the yearly services provided by exempted interpreters, as defined in subsection](#)  
12 [5-71-15\(4\).](#)

13 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS – INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF

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1           This act would make various changes regarding the licensing requirements for  
2 interpreters for the deaf.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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