
SENATE BILL 5793

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senators Fraser and Kohl

Read first time 02/12/97. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing children;
2 adding a new section to chapter 28A.155 RCW; creating new sections; and
3 making appropriations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that deafness involves
6 the most basic of human needs, the ability to acquire language and to
7 communicate with other human beings. The legislature finds that many
8 deaf and hard of hearing children use, as their primary language,
9 American sign language, while others express and receive communication
10 through English-based sign language, or orally and aurally, with or
11 without visual signs or cues. Still other young deaf, deaf-blind, and
12 hard of hearing children lack any functional language skills. The
13 legislature further finds that deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing
14 children should have an opportunity for an education in which each
15 individual child's unique language or communication mode is respected,
16 used, and developed in order to learn and communicate effectively.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The office of deaf and hard of hearing
18 services, in conjunction with the office of the superintendent of

1 public instruction, the state board of education, and the educational
2 service districts shall conduct a study and report to the legislature
3 by January 1, 1999, on the unmet needs of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of
4 hearing students in public K-12 schools. The study shall include a
5 recommendation on the feasibility of consolidating educational programs
6 serving deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing children into magnet
7 school programs to facilitate serving deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of
8 hearing students with a sufficient number of age and language mode
9 peers to develop the student's linguistic and social skills and to
10 minimize the impact of insufficient numbers of qualified personnel
11 trained to work with the deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing
12 students. The study shall also include a recommendation on the
13 feasibility of requiring educational interpreters to receive state or
14 national certification.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 The state board of education, in conjunction with the office of
18 deaf and hard of hearing services, shall establish competencies for
19 educational interpreters for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing
20 students. After September 1, 1999, only qualified educational
21 interpreters that demonstrate the competencies may be used as
22 educational interpreters for students in public schools.

23 A school district may seek a waiver from the state board of
24 education competency requirements if the district can demonstrate that
25 there is no educational interpreter within a reasonable distance from
26 the school who meets the competencies established by the state board of
27 education and the district submits a plan to remedy the lack of
28 qualified educational interpreters who can provide services in the
29 school district.

30 The state board of education shall notify the office of deaf and
31 hard of hearing services when a district seeks a waiver. The office of
32 deaf and hard of hearing services may make a recommendation to the
33 state board of education on whether a waiver should be granted, and
34 whether the district plan to remedy the lack of qualified educational
35 interpreters is appropriate.

36 The state board of education shall adopt rules on competencies for
37 educational interpreters for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing
38 students.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The sum of forty-five thousand dollars, or
2 as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium
3 ending June 30, 1999, from the general fund to the office of deaf and
4 hard of hearing services for the purposes of section 2 of this act.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The sum of four thousand nine hundred fifty
6 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
7 the biennium ending June 30, 1999, from the general fund to the state
8 board of education for the purposes of section 3 of this act.

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