

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1893

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, April 1, 2005

Title: An act relating to certification of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Brief Description: Providing for a certification endorsement for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McDermott, Kenney and Dickerson).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/15/05, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 3/31/05, 4/1/05 [DPA, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Mulliken.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

Background: During 2003, the House Children and Family Services Committee assembled a work group on deaf education in Washington. The work group's purpose was to consider the respective roles of and relationships among the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), local school districts, educational service districts, community services, and community resources in the delivery of effective education to hearing impaired children throughout the state. In addition, the work group considered different appropriate service delivery models for hearing impaired children.

The work group included representation from parents and teachers of hearing impaired children, the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), educators, the Board of Trustees of the WSD, the Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, and the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program. In addition, four members of the Senate, a member of the House Education Committee, and the members of the House Children and Family Services Committee served on the work group.

The work group held three meetings over the course of the interim to discuss a range of issues, including service delivery in the state from newborn hearing screening and early intervention services through the P-12 system, technological advances relating to hearing

impairment, and research on outcomes and costs related to hearing impairment. One of the goals of the work group was the certification of teachers who have the educational and communication skills required to meet the needs of hearing impaired students.

The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes certification requirements for teachers and educational staff associates. Teachers must be endorsed in a particular area of expertise from a list adopted by rule by the SBE. An endorsement in the specialty area of education designed exclusively for hearing impaired students is not included on the list of permissible endorsements.

Summary of Amended Bill: The SBE, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), will develop endorsement requirements for teachers of hearing impaired students. The standards for the endorsement will be based on the skills and knowledge necessary to serve the education and communication needs of these students. When establishing the rules for the endorsement, the SBE will consider special education endorsement requirements to have been met by applicants who intend to teach hearing impaired students if the applicants have a baccalaureate or master's degree from a teacher training program that has been approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf.

The SBE, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), will develop educational staff associate (ESA) certification for educational interpreters of deaf and hard of hearing students.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: ESA certification developed by SBE is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Even if deaf students have the best teachers in the world, they will receive a terrible education if they have a terrible interpreter. Deaf students gain their instruction through their interpreters. Non-qualified interpreters for deaf students have a major, damaging impact on the education of deaf and hard of hearing students. If deaf students do not receive an adequate education, they will not be prepared for further education and the workforce, and will become a burden on society rather than being taxpaying citizens. Interpreters who are certificated and qualified may be a cost burden in the short term for schools, but there are savings over time as these students will make better students and will need fewer services. The institutions of higher education want to develop teacher and ESA certification and would welcome this legislation.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Greg Williamson, OSPI; Carol Carrothers, WSDS; Kathleen Morris, WSRID; Lynn Maier, WPEA/VFCW 365; Lucinda Young, WEA; Vikki Royal, WSRID; Jane Sherman, WSU; Larry Petersen, Washington Association of the Deaf.