

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF LICENSING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, deafness is of low incidence, and there is a considerable lack of knowledge and understanding regarding deafness; and

WHEREAS, approximately seventy-five percent of persons who perform interpreting for the deaf and hard of hearing in New Mexico are not certified by any certifying body; and

WHEREAS, the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) does not require that persons performing sign language interpreting be certified but beckons state governments to take measures to define quality interpreting standards in their individual jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the current definition in the ADA of "qualified" is so broad as to include sign interpreters who are not able to provide adequate services to the deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, there are currently no legal standards for regulating sign interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, licensure of sign interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing will ensure protection of New Mexico

residents from individuals who misrepresent their ability to provide adequate interpretation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a study be conducted of the feasibility of developing standards for licensure of sign language interpreters in the state of New Mexico by the New Mexico school for the deaf and the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons and that the results of this study and proposed legislation, if any, be presented to the first session of the forty-sixth legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the board of regents of the New Mexico school for the deaf and to the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons.