

A JOINT MEMORIAL  
REQUESTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER  
LICENSURE SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, House Joint Memorial 1 of the first session of the forty-fifth legislature in 2001 requested that a study be conducted of the feasibility of developing standards for licensure of sign language interpreters in the state by the New Mexico school for the deaf and the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons; and

WHEREAS, the study demonstrated the need to pursue the establishment of a licensure system for interpreters for the deaf and hard-of-hearing; and

WHEREAS, the study demonstrated the licensure system should be regulated and administered by a regulating board established under the regulation and licensing department; and

WHEREAS, access to quality communication and information impacts access to health care, vocational and business opportunities, higher and continuing education, governmental services and full participation in the democratic process, as well as all other aspects of community life; and

WHEREAS, a collaborative effort between the New Mexico school for the deaf and the public education department resulted in the education of the deaf and hard-of-hearing 2003 task force report, "Toward Brighter Futures"; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 task force report called for "the provision of communicatively fluent staff, adult role models and communication-accessible program components and resources, including skilled interpreters"; and

WHEREAS, the forty-sixth legislature of New Mexico passed the "Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children's Educational Bill of Rights", which stated the public education department, the New Mexico school for the deaf and the department of health are to ensure that "...these children have what every other child takes for granted, including an educational environment in which their language and communication needs are fully addressed and developed and in which they have early, ongoing and quality access to planned and incidental communication opportunities.";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a state evaluation and licensure system for sign language interpreters is needed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, the public education department, the regulation and licensing department and the New Mexico school for the deaf be requested to collaborate to develop and recommend a sign language licensure mechanism for the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations resulting from this collaboration be reported no later than

January 30, 2006 to the appropriate legislative committee as deemed by the New Mexico legislative council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be sent to the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, the public education department, the regulation and licensing department and the New Mexico school for the deaf.