

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2518

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying oath requirements for interpreters.

Sponsors: House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Goodman, Rodne and Kelley; by request of Board For Judicial Administration).

House Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Background:

Certified and Registered Interpreters.

In 2009 Washington courts hired interpreters in more than 75 languages. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is responsible for both certifying and registering interpreters. Interpreters can be certified in more than 10 languages and must complete several requirements in order to be certified. If not certified, a qualified interpreter has the option of being registered in more than 40 languages. An interpreter must complete a series of requirements in order to be registered.

The AOC administers the oath taken by interpreters at the time of certification or registration, requiring the interpreters to uphold their code of conduct and accurately interpret for legal proceedings. Every two years, certified and registered interpreters must submit a form to the AOC affirming their compliance with continuing education requirements. The AOC must maintain a current list of certified and registered interpreters.

Interpreter Requirements.

Where a non-English speaking person is compelled to appear at a legal proceeding, the presiding officer of the proceeding must appoint an interpreter certified by the AOC unless good cause is noted on the record by the presiding officer. If good cause exists, the officer must appoint a qualified interpreter.

Before beginning to interpret, an interpreter is required to take an oath affirming that the interpreter will make a true interpretation to the person being examined of all the proceedings in a language that the person understands, and that the interpreter will repeat the statements

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of the person being examined to the court or agency, in English, to the best of the interpreter's ability. A 2009 Court of Appeals case affirmed that this statute requires interpreters to be sworn in at each proceeding at which they will be interpreting.

Summary:

Certified or registered interpreters must take the required oath upon certification or registration and every two years thereafter, but they may forego taking the oath at the beginning of each interpreting session. The AOC must maintain a record of the oath taken by certified and registered interpreters in the manner that the list of certified and registered interpreters is maintained.

If the interpreter is not certified or registered, the interpreter must take the oath at the beginning of each interpreting session and submit the interpreter's qualifications on the record.

"Registered interpreter" means an interpreter who is registered by the AOC.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 10, 2010