

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1727

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C 171 L 91  
*Synopsis As Enacted*

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to interpreters in legal proceedings.

By House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Appelwick, Jacobsen, Paris, Morton, Mielke, Brekke, Anderson, Forner, Day, Vance, R. Johnson and Wineberry).

House Committee on Judiciary  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Senate Committee on Law & Justice

**Background:** When a hearing or speech impaired person is a party or a witness to any legal proceeding, the judge must appoint a qualified interpreter to assist the person.

A "qualified interpreter" means an interpreter who is certified by the interpreters' registry for the deaf, is able to provide accurate and effective communication between the impaired person and the other participants in the proceeding, and can translate into spoken language. Depending upon the proceeding, an interpreter must meet certain skill levels. An "intermediary interpreter" means a hearing impaired person who is certified by the interpreters' registry for the deaf with a reverse skills certificate and who is able to assist in providing an accurate interpretation between spoken and sign language by acting as an intermediary between a hearing impaired person and a qualified interpreter. Currently, the state does not certify interpreters and does not have a registry.

An interpreter must take an oath in a judicial or administrative proceeding that the interpreter will accurately interpret what is said.

The chapter of law regarding interpreters contains multiple definition and application sections resulting in duplication and internal inconsistency. One definition of "hearing" impaired does not include reference to speech impairment.

**Summary:** The definition of "qualified interpreter" is changed to mean a visual language interpreter who is certified by the state or is certified by the interpreters'

registry for the deaf to hold the comprehensive skills certificate, or both certificates of interpretation and transliteration, or an interpreter who can readily translate statements of speech impaired persons into spoken language. The term "intermediary interpreter" is amended to include a person who holds a reverse skills certificate from the state. Interpreters may be obtained through state lists as well as the deaf interpreters' registry. "Intermediary interpreters" may be appointed to act as interpreters instead of or in addition to qualified interpreters for proceedings involving hearing impaired participants.

An additional requirement of impartiality is added to the requirements for interpreters.

The definition of "hearing impaired person" is expanded to include persons with speech impairments. Three statutes that in part duplicate and in part conflict with other provisions in the chapter are repealed. Those three sections concern definitions, and appointment and compensation of interpreters.

***Votes on Final Passage:***

House	98	0	
Senate	38	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

***Effective:*** July 28, 1991