

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1523

As Passed House

March 19, 1991

Title: An act relating to establishing regional service centers for the deaf.

Brief Description: Establishing regional service centers for the deaf.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Revenue (originally sponsored by Representatives Day, Wineberry, Edmondson, Bray, Lisk, Belcher, Inslee, Morris, Jones, Mitchell, Franklin, Mielke, Nelson, Casada, Brekke, Ferguson, Leonard, Silver, Ludwig, Rayburn, Peery, Scott, Pruitt, Chandler, McLean, Holland, Wang, Jacobsen, Winsley and Anderson).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 13, 1991, DP;
Revenue, March 9, 1991, DPS;
Passed House, March 19, 1991, 95-3.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
REVENUE**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 14 members: Representatives Wang, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Holland, Ranking Minority Member; Wynne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Belcher; Brumsickle; Day; Leonard; Morris; Morton; Phillips; Rust; and Silver.

Staff: Rick Peterson (786-7150).

Background: Deaf and hard of hearing people have difficulty accessing services for which they are eligible and entitled, because of their disability. The current array of services available through the Department of Social and Health Services is not always available to deaf and hard of hearing people because of a lack of: interpreters, coordination among service providers, and training and consultative services to public and private agencies. There are currently no taxes deducted to support deaf services and programs.

Summary of Bill: An office of deaf services is established within the Department of Social and Health Services. The department will establish a regional service center for the deaf and hard of hearing in each of five regions. The regional service centers will provide individual and family counseling, interpreter services, and vocational rehabilitation. Regional service centers may provide deaf and hard of hearing persons with lists of licensed hearing aid dispensers. The center cannot provide services offered by hearing aid dispensers licensed under Chapter 18.35 RCW. A state deaf services advisory committee and five regional deaf service advisory committees are established. A tax, in addition to the business and occupation tax, is placed on the manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing of audio tapes, audio records, and audio compact disks. The tax rate is four-tenths of one percent. The program is declared null and void unless taxes providing the funding source are in this bill or another. Also, the appropriation in the bill is eliminated if the program is funded in the 1991-93 operating budget.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 1, 1991.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: (Human Services): Deaf and hard of hearing people need better communication services through interpreters and other services to become valuable, contributing members of society. Many services for the deaf and hard of hearing are not fully utilized, because it is difficult to access them. Regional deaf service centers can provide these services in close proximity to deaf and hard of hearing people's communities.

(Revenue): Hearing impaired programs are the least funded but the most common form of disability. Existing deaf and hard of hearing centers are understaffed and cannot provide

the needed services. Service needs exist for school age children, interpreters, vocational and family counselors.

Testimony Against: (Human Services): None.

(Revenue): None.

Witnesses: (Human Services): Gary Mann, Central Washington Service Center for the Deaf; Thelma Struch and Leon Curtis, Department of Social and Health Services; Jean Stokesbary, Southwest Washington Center for the Deaf; and Sharon Schira-Layton, Camille Poe and Janet Johanson, Seattle Service Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(Revenue): Thelma Struck, Asst Sec., DSHS; Gary Mann, Director, Central Washington Service Center for the Deaf; Linda McLead, Sharon Schira-Layton, Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities; Sandi Carr, DSHS advisory committee member; Jim Morris, past President of PTA for Washington School for the Deaf; Yvonne Rivers, Spokane Service Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Jean Stokesbary, Southwest Washington Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and Tom Casey, Washington State Grange.