

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1727

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE, APRIL 4, 1991

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

SPONSORS: 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

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Nelson, Chairman; Thorsness, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Hayner, L. Kreidler, Madsen, Rasmussen, and A. Smith.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Hearing Dates: April 2, 1991; April 4, 1991

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" is defined in two different sections of RCW Chapter 2.42. Reading the two sections together, a qualified interpreter is one certified by the interpreters registry for the deaf, who is able to translate spoken language to impaired persons and who can translate statements of impaired persons into spoken language. Depending upon the proceeding, an interpreter must meet certain skill levels ranging from a specialist to a partially certified interpreter. An "intermediary interpreter" means a hearing impaired person who is certified by the interpreters registry for the deaf with a reverse skills certificate 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.

If it appears that an interpreter is not providing accurate and effective communication, another qualified interpreter may be appointed.

SUMMARY:

The definition of qualified interpreter dealing with certification is changed. A qualified interpreter is 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. 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 hearings involving hearing impaired participants.

Lack of impartiality is added to the grounds for replacing interpreters.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

Duplicate and contradictory sections of the Revised Code of Washington dealing with interpreters are repealed. The provision of interpreters for those with a speech impairment is continued.

TESTIMONY FOR:

This will increase the number of interpreters available and will make the courts accessible to all deaf or hard of hearing people because current certification requirements have unnecessarily limited the availability of interpreters.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Roger Pendergraft, Michael Izak, Robert Rummel, Washington Association of the Deaf; Rev. Fred DeBerry, Calvary Baptist Deaf Chapel