
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2176

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Lantz, Warnick, Pedersen, Ross, Hasegawa, Kenney, Santos and Goodman)

READ FIRST TIME 02/23/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to interpreter services; amending RCW 2.42.120 and
2 2.43.040; and adding a new section to chapter 2.43 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 2.43 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) Each trial court organized under this title and Titles 3 and 35
7 RCW must develop a written language assistance plan to provide a
8 framework for the provision of interpreter services for non-English-
9 speaking persons accessing the court system in both civil and criminal
10 legal matters. The language assistance plan must include, at a
11 minimum, provisions addressing the following:

12 (a) Procedures to identify and assess the language needs of non-
13 English-speaking persons using the court system;

14 (b) Procedures for the appointment of interpreters as required
15 under RCW 2.43.030. Such procedures shall not require the non-English-
16 speaking person to make the arrangements for the interpreter to appear
17 in court;

18 (c) Procedures for notifying court users of the right to and

1 availability of interpreter services. Such information shall be
2 prominently displayed in the courthouse in the five foreign languages
3 that census data indicates are predominate in the jurisdiction;

4 (d) A process for providing timely communication with non-English
5 speakers by all court employees who have regular contact with the
6 public and meaningful access to court services, including access to
7 services provided by the clerk's office;

8 (e) Procedures for evaluating the need for translation of written
9 materials, prioritizing those translation needs, and translating the
10 highest priority materials. These procedures should take into account
11 the frequency of use of forms by the language group, and the cost of
12 orally interpreting the forms;

13 (f) A process for requiring and providing training to judges, court
14 clerks, and other court staff on the requirements of the language
15 assistance plan and how to effectively access and work with
16 interpreters; and

17 (g) A process for ongoing evaluation of the language assistance
18 plan and monitoring of the implementation of the language assistance
19 plan.

20 (2) Each court, when developing its language assistance plan, must
21 consult with judges, court administrators and court clerks,
22 interpreters, and members of the community, such as domestic violence
23 organizations, pro bono programs, courthouse facilitators, legal
24 services programs, and/or other community groups whose members speak a
25 language other than English.

26 (3) Each court must provide a copy of its language assistance plan
27 to the interpreter commission established by supreme court rule for
28 approval prior to receiving state reimbursement for interpreter costs
29 under this chapter.

30 (4) Each court must provide to the administrative office of the
31 courts by November 15, 2007, a report detailing an assessment of the
32 need for interpreter services for non-English speakers in
33 court-mandated classes or programs, the extent to which interpreter
34 services are currently available for court-mandated classes or
35 programs, and the resources that would be required to ensure that
36 interpreters are provided to non-English speakers in court-mandated
37 classes or programs. The administrative office of the courts shall

1 compile these reports and provide them to the appropriate committees of
2 the legislature by December 15, 2007.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 2.42.120 and 1985 c 389 s 12 are each amended to read
4 as follows:

5 (1) If a hearing impaired person is a party or witness at any stage
6 of a judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding in the state or in a
7 political subdivision, including but not limited to civil and criminal
8 court proceedings, grand jury proceedings, proceedings before a
9 magistrate, juvenile proceedings, adoption proceedings, mental health
10 commitment proceedings, and any proceeding in which a hearing impaired
11 person may be subject to confinement or criminal sanction, the
12 appointing authority shall appoint and pay for a qualified interpreter
13 to interpret the proceedings.

14 (2) If the parent, guardian, or custodian of a juvenile brought
15 before a court is hearing impaired, the appointing authority shall
16 appoint and pay for a qualified interpreter to interpret the
17 proceedings.

18 (3) If a hearing impaired person participates in a program or
19 activity ordered by a court as part of the sentence or order of
20 disposition, required as part of a diversion agreement or deferred
21 prosecution program, or required as a condition of probation or parole,
22 the appointing authority shall appoint and pay for a qualified
23 interpreter to interpret exchange of information during the program or
24 activity.

25 (4) If a law enforcement agency conducts a criminal investigation
26 involving the interviewing of a hearing impaired person, whether as a
27 victim, witness, or suspect, the appointing authority shall appoint
28 and pay for a qualified interpreter throughout the investigation.
29 Whenever a law enforcement agency conducts a criminal investigation
30 involving the interviewing of a minor child whose parent, guardian, or
31 custodian is hearing impaired, whether as a victim, witness, or
32 suspect, the appointing authority shall appoint and pay for a qualified
33 interpreter throughout the investigation. No employee of the law
34 enforcement agency who has responsibilities other than interpreting may
35 be appointed as the qualified interpreter.

36 (5) If a hearing impaired person is arrested for an alleged
37 violation of a criminal law the arresting officer or the officer's

1 supervisor shall, at the earliest possible time, procure and arrange
2 payment for a qualified interpreter for any notification of rights,
3 warning, interrogation, or taking of a statement. No employee of the
4 law enforcement agency who has responsibilities other than interpreting
5 may be appointed as the qualified interpreter.

6 (6) Where it is the policy and practice of a court of this state or
7 of a political subdivision to appoint and pay counsel for persons who
8 are indigent, the appointing authority shall appoint and pay for a
9 qualified interpreter for hearing impaired persons to facilitate
10 communication with counsel in all phases of the preparation and
11 presentation of the case.

12 (7) Where a qualified interpreter is appointed for a hearing
13 impaired person by a judicial officer in a proceeding before a court
14 under subsection (1), (2), or (3) of this section in compliance with
15 the provisions of RCW 2.42.130 and 2.42.170, the state of Washington
16 shall reimburse the appointing authority for one-half of the payment to
17 the interpreter.

18 **Sec. 3.** RCW 2.43.040 and 1989 c 358 s 4 are each amended to read
19 as follows:

20 (1) Interpreters appointed according to this chapter are entitled
21 to a reasonable fee for their services and shall be reimbursed for
22 actual expenses which are reasonable as provided in this section.

23 (2) In all legal proceedings in which the non-English-speaking
24 person is a party, or is subpoenaed or summoned by the appointing
25 authority or is otherwise compelled by the appointing authority to
26 appear, including criminal proceedings, grand jury proceedings,
27 coroner's inquests, mental health commitment proceedings, and other
28 legal proceedings initiated by agencies of government, the cost of
29 providing the interpreter shall be borne by the governmental body
30 initiating the legal proceedings.

31 (3) In other legal proceedings, the cost of providing the
32 interpreter shall be borne by the non-English-speaking person unless
33 such person is indigent according to adopted standards of the body. In
34 such a case the cost shall be an administrative cost of the
35 governmental body under the authority of which the legal proceeding is
36 conducted.

1 (4) The cost of providing the interpreter is a taxable cost of any
2 proceeding in which costs ordinarily are taxed.

3 (5) Where an interpreter is appointed by a judicial officer in a
4 proceeding before a court at public expense, the state of Washington
5 shall reimburse the appointing authority for one-half of the payment to
6 the interpreter where:

7 (a) The interpreter appointed is an interpreter certified by the
8 administrative office of the courts or is a qualified interpreter
9 registered by the administrative office of the courts in a noncertified
10 language, or where the necessary language is not certified or
11 registered, the interpreter has been qualified by the judicial officer
12 pursuant to this chapter;

13 (b) The court conducting the legal proceeding has an approved
14 language assistance plan that complies with section 1 of this act; and

15 (c) The fee paid to the interpreter for services is in accordance
16 with standards established by the administrative office of the courts.

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