

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5810

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As of January 11, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to clarifying the collective bargaining unit for interpreters providing language access services to certain state agencies.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying the collective bargaining unit for interpreters providing language access services to certain state agencies.

**Sponsors:** Senators Saldaña, Valdez, Lovick, Dhingra, Holy, Robinson, Conway, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Nguyen, Nobles, Salomon, Trudeau and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor & Commerce: 1/11/24.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Removes references to appointments from the statute relating to the appropriate bargaining unit for spoken language interpreters providing services for the Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and Medicaid enrollees.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

**Staff:** Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

**Background:** Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state, bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). Language access providers also have collective bargaining rights under PECBA.

A language access provider is any independent contractor who provides spoken language interpreter services whether paid by a broker, language access agency, or the respective department:

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

- for Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) appointments, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) appointments, Medicaid enrollee appointments, or who provided these services on or after January 1, 2011, and before June 10, 2012;
- for Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) authorized medical and vocational providers who provided these services on or after January 1, 2019; or
- for state agencies who provided these services on or after January 1, 2019.

Managers and employees of brokers or language access agencies are not language access providers for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Language access providers may form three different statewide bargaining units, which include:

- providers for DSHS appointments, DCYF appointments, or Medicaid enrollee appointments;
- providers for injured workers or crime victims receiving benefits from L&I; and
- other providers for any state agency through the Department of Enterprise Services.

**Summary of Bill:** References to appointments are removed from the statute relating to the appropriate bargaining unit for spoken language interpreters providing services for DSHS, DCYF, and Medicaid enrollees, so the appropriate bargaining unit is a statewide unit of language access providers who provide spoken language interpreter services for DSHS, DCYF, or Medicaid enrollees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on December 15, 2023.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: There is a growing need for interpreters in recent years and the workforce is generally invisible. Agencies have done a good job providing interpreters to people who need those services. The bill is not expanding who can collectively bargain, it is clarifying an ambiguity in the law related to bargaining units. Newer bargaining units do not use the term appointment, so there is confusion around the statutes that use the term.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Prime Sponsor.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.