

April 17, 2017

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

As a Portland resident, a teacher of the deaf, and a parent of a child who is deaf, I'm here to tentatively support of HB 3412. I want to give my full support, but I do have some concerns about some of the bill's language. The bill uses "English" throughout. This term should be clarified to differentiate between spoken and written language. The use of "English" does not acknowledge the that children with hearing loss may be learning other spoken or signed languages. For example, at Tucker Maxon, where I work, we have children whose first and primary languages are not English. In their first three years of life, they learned Spanish and Russian and only started learning English when they entered preschool. With this in mind, the word "English" should be modified to represent a child's home, native or primary language.

My own daughter who is deaf learned two languages, and we need to make sure the assessment task force acknowledges that children with hearing loss are born to families who speak many different languages. It will be important for the task force to select assessments that are validated for the use of children who are bilingual or multilingual.

Thank you.



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