

To whom it may concern,

I sincerely and strongly ask that you to oppose HB 2359.

I'm not sure you if you've ever been sick and needed an interpreter before, but we have, and it isn't a simple task. Imagine yourself in a hectic ER and you have no way to communicate to your health care team without the assistance of an in person interpreter. Imagine now, it isn't the fact you speak a foreign language or that you're foreign to the country, but rather, you were simply born deaf. So all you need for appropriate care is access to an ASL interpreter. Simple right? Not so much.

The pool of certified ASL interpreters is already limited, and now, you consider adding yet another barrier for effective communication. You're now going to require more time from medical staff to triage the interpreters vaccination status that will directly hinder the immediate medical care of the patient that's presented to your ER. Imagine a scenario where every second counts, and the medications you take at home could interact causing serious or life threatening injury, but yet your interpreter is tied up in legal technicalities instead of being allowed access to do their job, a job that's protected by the ADA.

Now that you've thought about that for a moment, imagine that ER patient being YOUR child (young or grown). Your child laying there in need of immediate care and some technicality is preventing them from accessing the ASL interpreter. Are you willing to gamble the life of your own children while staff tries to track down vaccination status of the interpreter present to fill the ADA requirements of effective communication? I'd wager to say, not a single one of you would be willing to risk it if it were your child, so I beg you, please don't gamble with the lives of my children!

I'm sure you're probably thinking, just wheel in the monitor screen for a zoom interpreter of sorts if they're so worried. So now your healthcare needs are being met solely on the speed of your hospital or medical providers WiFi capabilities and praying the connection doesn't glitch. That is absolutely not a safe alternative, spoken from experience with said systems.

Without appropriate access to certified interpreters there will be delays in care, there will be lives lost, there will be medical errors made that could've easily been prevented. There will be incredible amounts of additional stress to the patient where there shouldn't be. Please vote to oppose HB 2359!

Signed,

A momma of deaf kids that just wants to know they'll have the same access to care that you do.