

Preston Bass

INTERPRETING SERVICES
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April 19, 2021

Chief Pamela Ojeda
North Las Vegas Police Department
2250 Las Vegas Blvd North, Suite 300
North Las Vegas, NV 89030

RE: Deaf Woman and North Las Vegas Police Incident

This letter is being sent as a voice of concern regarding the recent incident where the North Las Vegas Police pulled over a Deaf woman with her two children in the car.

From what the community has seen on the news channels and social media, it appears that the officers did not acknowledge her deafness and did not call for an American Sign Language Interpreter to assist with communication. Despite her efforts to inform the police that she was Deaf, nothing was done. Her children were asked by the officer to "tell their mother what they wanted to say". The officer kept talking to the woman with a mask on and from what we saw, did not write anything as well.

I am concerned on two main levels. One, my interpreting agency, Preston Bass Interpreting Services, LLC, is a registered vendor with the North Las Vegas Police Department. Therefore, should have been called to provide interpreting services. That did not happen. Secondly, using children to interpret is a violation of state law, NRS 656A, which clearly states that interpreters must be registered and fully vetted with the state of NV Interpreter Registry. Again, a violation.

It is apparent to me that the officers are not aware of the procedures and behaviors that are necessary when encountering a Deaf individual. I strongly suggest that you consider including an Orientation to Deafness in your training manual and program.

As well as being a vendor, I am an instructor at the College of Southern Nevada Deaf Studies Program. Our program is ready, willing, and able to offer advice as to how to proceed in improving your department's understanding of working with Deaf people you encounter.

Please contact me for any resources you need as I will be more than happy to assist. With support we can overcome this gross injustice and improve relations between the Deaf community and the police.



Caroline Bass