

Steve Sisolak
Governor

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Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
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Dena Schmidt
Administrator

NAC 656A HEARING MEETING MINUTES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Communication Access Services program held a public hearing to consider amendments to Chapter 656A of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) related to the practice of Sign Language Interpreters in Nevada.

The hearing was conducted via videoconference beginning at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, August 30, 2022, at the following location: Join Zoom Meeting Online, Meeting ID: 836 9759 5128, Passcode: 494722 and via Teleconference 1-669-900-6833. The workshop was conducted in accordance with NRS 241.020, Nevada's Open Meeting Law.

ADSD Staff: Jennifer Montoya, Jeff Jaech, Sara Nolan, Kim Johnson, Megan Johnson, Kalen Beck, Adrienne Navarro

Accommodations Team: Jamie Jaramillo, Emily Beech, Becky Van Auken

Members of the Public: Andrea Juillerat-Olvera, Betty Hammond, Dawn Duran, Dawn Lyons, Dena Maurer, Denise Asap sports, Ehren Dei, Ellen Thompson, Gina Gifford, Goldie Kappes, Griselda Navarrete, Hanna Paddack, Hans C Ferguson, Helaina, Joey Hitchcock, Kayla, Kim Ryan, Kitty Edwards, Laura (LT) Thompson, Laura Fink, Lonyae Bigby, Lora Turner, Lyssa Goldsworthy, Marlene Daniel, Michelle (Albrecht) Cordova, Tim Smalley - Nevada Association of the Deaf, Nevada Black Deaf Advocates, Sandra Jackson, Sara Brewer, Shannon Council, Sherlee Williams

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Jennifer Montoya began the introduction of the workshop process and explained virtual meeting logistics.

II. Public Comment

No public comment.

III. Discussion of Proposed Permanent Regulations

Jennifer Montoya explained the amendment of regulations that pertain to Chapter 656A of the Nevada Administrative Code. The proposed changes can be found on the registry website at:

https://adsd.nv.gov/Programs/Physical/ComAccessSvc/Interpreter_Registry/Interpreter_Registry/

IV. Public Comment

Hans Ferguson gave a public comment. Mr. Ferguson expressed the concern that adding additional requirements for interpreters would reduce the workforce. In addition, this could create a barrier for new to the area skilled, proficient, and credentialed interpreters with 20-30 of experience if they do not possess the required degree. They would be precluded from providing services in the state of Nevada. Mr. Ferguson does not believe this will improve the interpreting situation of the state when the community is already in desperate need. Mr. Ferguson believes that requiring a degree in any field will not be beneficial to the interpreting practice, and the state will see a lack of registrants as well as interpreters leaving the field. Mr. Ferguson added that the annual renewal requirement could be problematic as if they are grandfathered into the degree waiver but forget to renew their registration, interpreters will be lost from the field due to these new requirements.

Dawn Lyons gave a public comment. Ms. Lyons agrees that requiring a B.A. degree in any field does not necessarily impact an interpreter's qualifications. Also, that it will create barriers for interpreters to move to Nevada from another state.

Lonyae Bigby gave a public comment. Lonyae stated that they agree with Hans.

Andrea Juillerat Olvera gave a public comment. Ms. Juillerat Olvera is concerned that CODA's (children of deaf adults) will be unable to apply for registration with the change in requirements. She stated that CODA's are highly skilled and are often the best interpreters available but fears their knowledge and expertise will be lost with additional barriers put in place.

Laura Fink gave a public comment. Ms. Fink stated that annual renewal will place an additional burden on administration and is concerned if a plan is already in place for that. Ms. Fink is also concerned that the increased requirements will affect the certified deaf interpreter population from moving to the state, as the state of Nevada does not have many CDIs. Her concern is that this barrier will also prevent deaf individuals from desiring to become interpreters.

Hans Ferguson gave a second public comment. Mr. Ferguson stated that currently k-12 teachers are lacking and to combat the reduced work force, school districts are allowing people without degrees to teach. He stated that with those issues in the educational field, the interpreting field is experiencing something to a similar extent. Mr. Ferguson believes the solution stated here is working in reverse; while there is a lack, the state is raising the standards creating a barrier for those with interpreting skills and talents.

Betty Hammond made a public comment. Ms. Hammond's concern relates to if school districts are bought in to the laws that are being put into place. She stated that raising the requirements will cause a lack of availability and is concerned for who will be paying for interpreters to receive the required training. Ms. Hammond stated that a gap will need to be filled when interpreters leave the field. Also, she asked if the deaf interpreter population will have an exception from this rule or if they will be held to the same standards.

Dawn Duran made a public comment. Ms. Duran stated she understands the need to elevate interpreter skills and the increase is to help support a high level of skill in interpreters, however, the state currently does not have enough interpreters to supply the existing need. Agencies currently are recruiting from out of state to supply the need, and the lack of interpreters is more of a pressing issue than the quality at this time. Ms. Duran supports the philosophy and goals of the CAS program, but priority should be placed on recruitment at this time.

V. Adjournment at 4:41 pm PST