

HOUSE No. 2025

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Diana DiZoglio

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the certification of interpreters in educational settings.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Diana DiZoglio</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>1/20/2017</i>
<i>Jack Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	
<i>Paul R. Heroux</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	
<i>Aaron Vega</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	

HOUSE No. 2025

By Ms. DiZoglio of Methuen, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2025) of Diana DiZoglio and others for legislation to establish certification for interpreters in educational settings. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)

An Act relative to the certification of interpreters in educational settings.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
2 section:

3 Section 37. Certification of Interpreters in educational settings.

4 (1)The following words, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, shall have the
5 following meanings:

6 “Limited English Proficient (LEP) Person” means Individual who has a limited ability to
7 read, write, speak, or understand English because the person uses primarily a language other than
8 English. This includes LEP parents or guardians of minor children, regardless of the children’s
9 LEP status.

10 “Interpretation” means the immediate oral rendering of an utterance from the source
11 language into the target language.

“Interpreter” means a person who is readily able to interpret spoken language simultaneously and consecutively from English to the target language and from the target language to English.

“Competent interpreter services” means interpreter services performed by a person who is fluent in English and in the primary language of the limited English proficient individual, who is trained and proficient in the skill and ethics of interpreting, and who is knowledgeable about specialized terms and concepts that must be interpreted for the purpose of the child’s education, including other school and relevant community programs, functions and activities, as well as terms related to services made available to parents.

“Parent” means a natural, adoptive, or foster parent of a child, a guardian, or an individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare.

(2) By June 30, 2018, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall adopt standards and competencies for the hiring and use of interpreters in educational settings in order to provide LEP parents and students with competent interpretation services. The Department shall promulgate regulations specifying the subject matter knowledge, skills, and competencies required of interpreters practicing in educational settings. Standards and competencies shall include, but not be limited to, fluency in the languages interpreted, familiarity with specialized concepts and terms used in the planning and implementation of educational programming, and awareness of the interpreter’s function in educational settings, including issues of confidentiality and ethics. The Department shall also promulgate regulations requiring

completion of a minimum number of hours of coursework on interpretation, preferably including practical application of skills in educational settings.

Only individuals who meet the established standards and have obtained an official recognition of the Department may act as interpreters or provide interpretation services in educational settings. The Department shall identify and publicize interpreter assessments, and shall establish a performance standard for each identified interpreter assessment, defining what constitutes a minimum assessment result. The assessments shall include, but not be limited to, assessing grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to interpret effectively from one language to another; understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an interpreter within the educational context; understanding of concepts and vocabulary related to educational standards, curricula, planning, and student development; and knowledge of guidelines for professional conduct, including ethics and confidentiality.

The Department shall also create a system for review and approval of individuals seeking to provide interpreting services, including requirements to incorporate renewal and maintenance of the individuals' credentials. The Department shall promulgate regulations specifying requirements for reassessment and continued professional development for renewal.

The Department shall adopt rules of practice and a code of ethics for interpreters. The rules and the code shall ensure that interpreters: protect confidentiality, remain impartial, interpret communications accurately and objectively, demonstrate familiarity with educational and psychological terminology and practices, demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of cultural differences, understand the professional role and boundaries of interpreters and are informed of procedures and consequences for ethical violations.