**SENATE BILL 238   
HOUSE BILL 487**

**“An Act regarding sign language proficiency   
for certain teachers and educational interpreters”**

**\*NO\* proof of American Sign Language (ASL) proficiency   
is currently required in Massachusetts   
for Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and for Educational Interpreters who work in settings where sign language is used**

**FACTS**

* American Sign Language (ASL) is a **recognized foreign language** in Massachusetts
  + *In all MA public elementary and secondary schools, American Sign Language shall be recognized as a standard, independent language with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary and cultural heritage. - MGL Chapter 71sec. 2B*
* Over **1200** deaf + hard of hearing (K-12) students utilize services provided by teachers of the deaf/educational interpreters in Massachusetts every academic year (*as documented by primary diagnosis on IEPs; actual number may be double*)
* Massachusetts issues approximately **15 teacher licenses every year** for “Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing”
* **ASL assessment tools** already piloted by MCDHH and proven to be successful include the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). It is proposed that **both the SLPI & EIPA be utilized** to establish proficiency.
* Minnesota has **successfully implemented** similar certification/registration requirements

**GOAL: American Sign Language PROOF OF PROFICIENCY as part of   
Massachusetts Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing licensure and/or registration for all teachers + educational interpreters who work with deaf + hard of hearing students in settings where sign language is used.**

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Chairperson, Legislative Task Force.

***Current Status:***

***Referred to the Joint Committee on Education***

***Public Hearing has been scheduled for September 19, 2013.***