



North Carolina
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Statement of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. and the North Carolina
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

**In Opposition of BILL DRAFT 2015-TQz-40 [v.7] –
Amend APA/Sunset Occupational Licensing Boards**

April 5, 2016

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) and the North Carolina Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (NCRID) strongly believe that setting standards is necessary to ensure that interpreters are prepared to meet the linguistic needs of all parties to an interpreted communication. Adherence to standards benefits professional interpreters, the Deaf community, businesses, and all consumers of interpreting services. **RID and NCRID urges you to oppose the effort to sunset the statute establishing interpreter qualifications in North Carolina.**

RID was established in 1964 and incorporated in 1972 as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit membership organization promoting the welfare and growth of individual interpreters as well as the profession of interpretation of American Sign Language and English. In order to promote excellence in interpreting, all interpreters should demonstrate skill, knowledge, and ability through the attainment of certification. State regulation of interpreting is a mechanism through which this goal can be more fully realized. NCRID, established in 1969 and incorporated in 1972, is a state affiliate chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. The mission of NCRID, Inc. is to provide state and local forums and an organizational structure for the continued growth and development of the profession of interpretation and transliteration of American Sign Language and English.

The need for state regulation of interpreters began in the early 1970s but pales in comparison to the effects produced by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was enacted in 1990. This landmark legislation transformed the face of professional interpreting and caused the demand for interpreting services to soar to unprecedented heights. The ADA defines a “qualified interpreter” as one, “...who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.” This definition, unfortunately, continues to cause a great deal of confusion among consumers, service providers and professional interpreters. While the definition empowers deaf and hearing consumers to demand effective communication, it provides no assistance to hiring entities (who are mandated by ADA to provide interpreter services) in determining who is “qualified” **before** services are provided. This is a critical point. Without the tools or mechanisms to identify who has attained some level of competency, hiring entities are ill-prepared to satisfy the mandates of ADA in locating and providing “qualified” interpreter services. State regulation of interpreters better protects all parties in an interpreted interaction.

Currently, 31 states are regulating the practice of interpreting in some way. 14 states regulate interpreters through a licensure system while 8 states have a registration or registry process. Nine states regulate interpreters through some other mechanism. And the national trend is moving toward regulation, with at least 12 states considering adopting or strengthening interpreter regulation within their borders.

Nearly every state across the country is faced with the issue of regulating the interpreting profession and practice. This is an issue of great importance considering the impact these decisions can have on the quality of service all consumers receive, as well as the state of the interpreting profession. RID and NCRID support the regulation of interpreters to ensure excellence in services delivered to the Deaf community. The impetus is now on you to continue to implement high standards that meet the professional needs of interpreters, the linguistic needs of the Deaf community, and the administrative needs of hiring entities. **Again, RID and NCRID urge you to oppose the proposal to sunset the statute establishing interpreter licensure in North Carolina.**