



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 5487**

February Session, 2026



**AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION WORKING GROUP AND INCREASING STATE  
ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY  
IMPAIRED AND DEAF.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) The Department of  
2 Education shall establish an American Sign Language education  
3 working group which shall consist of (1) a representative from each of  
4 the following: The Departments of Education and Aging and Disability  
5 Services, the Labor Department, the Office of Higher Education, the  
6 Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, the American School for the  
7 Deaf and the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, and (2) at least one  
8 American Sign Language instructor who teaches in a public school in  
9 the state.

10 (b) The working group shall provide recommendations to the  
11 Department of Education regarding the following:

12 (1) Curriculum guidance for American Sign Language instruction  
13 that includes, but is not limited to, aligning such curriculum with  
14 nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;

15 (2) Teacher certification standards based on standards established by  
16 the American Sign Language Teachers Association and the American

17 Sign Language Proficiency Interview that includes, but is not limited to,  
18 (A) establishment of a proficiency benchmark, (B) recognition of an  
19 alternative certification pathway for native American Sign Language  
20 users and interpreters, and (C) reciprocity with American Sign  
21 Language teaching certifications from other states; and

22 (3) Guidance to educator preparation programs in the state  
23 concerning, but not limited to, the (A) expansion of American Sign  
24 Language and interpretation education programs, (B) creation of  
25 educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement or  
26 alternative programs, and (C) establishment of bridge, endorsement or  
27 alternative programs for native American Sign Language users and  
28 certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

29 (c) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the  
30 Department of Education shall submit a progress report, in accordance  
31 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint  
32 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
33 matters relating to education and human services concerning the work  
34 of the American Sign Language education working group.

35 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 17a-812 of the general statutes is  
36 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
37 *2026*):

38 (d) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may expend  
39 up to [ten] fourteen thousand dollars per fiscal year per person twenty-  
40 one years of age or older who is both blind or visually impaired and  
41 deaf, in addition to any other expenditures for such person, for the  
42 purpose of providing community inclusion services through specialized  
43 public and private entities from which such person can benefit. The  
44 commissioner may determine the criteria by which a person is eligible  
45 to receive specialized services and may adopt regulations necessary to  
46 carry out the provisions of this subsection. For purposes of this  
47 subsection, "community inclusion services" means the assistance  
48 provided to persons with disabilities to enable them to connect with

49 their peers without disabilities and with the community at large.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>January 1, 2027</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-812(d)

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

The title was changed; and in Section 1(b)(3)(B), "alternative route programs" was changed to "alternative programs" for consistency.

**HS**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*