
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5487

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

SUMMARY

This bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish an American Sign Language (ASL) education working group to make recommendations to the department on the following:

1. curriculum guidance for ASL instruction, including aligning the curriculum with nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;
2. teacher certification standards based on those of the ASL Teachers Association and ASL Proficiency Interview, including establishing a proficiency benchmark, recognizing an alternative certification pathway for native ASL users and interpreters, and reciprocity with other states' ASL teaching certifications; and
3. guidance to Connecticut educator preparation programs on (a) expanding ASL and interpretation education programs; (b) creating educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement, or alternative programs; and (c) establishing bridge, endorsement, or alternative programs for native ASL users and certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

Under the bill, the working group members include (1) at least one Connecticut ASL public school instructor and (2) one representative each from SDE, the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), the Department of Labor, Office of Higher Education, Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, American School for the Deaf, and Connecticut Association of the Deaf.

Additionally, the bill increases, from \$10,000 to \$14,000, the amount ADS may spend each fiscal year on community inclusion services for people ages 21 and older who are both blind or visually impaired and deaf.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027, for the working group provision and July 1, 2026, for the ADS community inclusion services provision.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/19/2026)