



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Representative Donovan, Chair
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: 26 HOUSE 7932 AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY—LICENSING OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-0110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

Legislation Committee finds this bill Beneficial if amended

The Commission appreciates the intention of this bill, but has concerns about whether its goal can be achieved as it is written.

Lack of interpreter access leads to delays in medical treatment, impairs diagnosis which can lead to serious medical consequences. Both the Commission on the Deaf or Hard of Hearing (CDHH) and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities have heard much about this issue from the community and are advocating for changes to help. These solutions include increasing the number of available interpreters in the state by investing in an in-state college program in interpreting and deaf studies and adding a full-time position at the CDHH for interpreter and CART referral.

Unfortunately, the CDHH does not have regulatory or enforcement authority over health care facilities and interpreter services in those settings. To be effective, the bill would need to add a complaint process as well as an enforcement mechanism to the CDHH's authority. This would also require additional staff and funding for the Commission.

We would support the CDHH's proposal to move interpreter licensing and regulation to their agency. They are the agency with the most expertise in the area and have the trust of the deaf community that is essential in this role.

While we greatly appreciate the intention of the bill, we respectfully ask that the Committee review our and the CDHH's suggestions for revision so that we can ensure that it is effective.