

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

### **RS23577**

Recognizing that sign language interpreters can profoundly affect the lives of people of the state of Idaho, this Act creates a licensing system and sets qualification standards for those who engage in the practice of sign language interpreting. At least 13% of the general population (203,785 Idaho citizens) has a variety of hearing loss. Of that number, 2.42% (34,486 Idaho citizens) experience severe to profound hearing loss and rely on a visual mode of communication. This puts them at a distinct disadvantage with possible communication of incomplete, incorrect, and unethically delivered information, often by non-qualified interpreters. Ensuring deaf and hearing consumers receive appropriate interpreting services may reduce general threats to the health and safety of this statewide population. Professional interpreter licensing minimizes the liability of hiring entities providing services to deaf consumers. It also ensures equal access to education, the criminal justice system, and health care for deaf children and adults.

### **FISCAL NOTE**

There will be no fiscal impact on state or local funds; the cost of licensing will be borne by licensees and those seeking licenses.

#### **Contact:**

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