



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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March 3, 2011

The Honorable S. Quinton Johnson
Legislative Hall
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Representative Johnson:

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) truly appreciates your interest in considering an initiative which would require that Delaware's institutions of higher learning accept American Sign Language (ASL) in fulfillment of foreign language requirements. SCPD has been interested in this issue since it submitted comments in 2006 on proposed Department of Education regulations amending high school graduation standards and recommended that the Department adopt a definition of "world language" which included ASL. In addition, as you know, SCPD strongly endorsed legislation (H.B. 345 in which you were the prime sponsor) that recognizes ASL as a World Language for purposes of public school curriculum, and also strongly endorses this latest initiative for the following reasons:

- By statute [Title 14 Del.C. §4135] and regulation [14 DE Admin Code 505] American Sign Language ("ASL") is considered a World Language for Delaware public school students;
- Enrollment in ASL courses should be encouraged given the shortage of interpreters and interpreter/tutors for the Deaf in the educational system and in commerce;
- Many renowned colleges and universities recognize and accept ASL credits as World Language credits for purposes of meeting admission requirements, including Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, and University of Pennsylvania;
- Many Delaware Technical & Community College students take ASL courses and later apply for admission to the University of Delaware;
- Delaware's major institutions of higher learning (e.g. University of Delaware and Delaware State University) do not currently accept ASL credits as World Language credits for purposes of meeting admission requirements; and
- Admission of students graduating from Delaware public schools or transferring from other higher education institutions with ASL World Language credits to the University of Delaware is frustrated or deterred.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our observations on the proposed initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniese McMullin-Powell".

Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities