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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sHB 5224

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING STANDARDS FOR INTERPRETERS FOR DEAF, DEAFBLIND AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes related to interpreters registered with the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS). It:

1. requires ADS to regularly update its online list of registered interpreters and categorize them by the settings for which they are qualified;
2. eliminates a provision allowing people to report violations of interpreter credentialing laws to the state's protection and advocacy system (i.e., Disability Rights Connecticut);
3. expands the acceptable qualifications for registered interpreters working in medical or legal settings to include holding an Approved Deaf Interpreter credential from the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and
4. specifies that the circumstances under which interpreters must be credentialed for medical settings are those in which "physical health, mental health, or both" are discussed, rather than in which "health and wellness" are discussed.

The bill makes it a class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$500, 3-months imprisonment, or both, for someone to (1) engage in willful or fraudulent misrepresentation in an attempt to register with ADS or (2) falsely represent himself or herself as registered. However, an interpreter is not guilty of the latter merely because his or her registration renewal was delinquent for 30 days or less.

The bill also requires ADS to establish a webpage with information

on services for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people, including services it provides and those provided by the Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Children and Families departments. It also requires the other departments to provide a link to ADS on their websites.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes (e.g., updating terminology by changing from deaf-blind to deafblind; replacing references to the Department of Rehabilitation Services with the Department of Aging and Disability Services).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022, except a conforming change is effective upon passage

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Bill***

sHB 5230, favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, contains (1) the same provisions expanding qualifications for medical and legal settings and establishing penalties, (2) similar provisions on agency website requirements, and (3) separate provisions categorizing settings that are not educational, medical, or legal as “community settings.”

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18    Nay 0    (03/15/2022)