

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESB 6606

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### C 68 L 06

#### Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Requiring standards for educational interpreters for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fraser, Oke, Fairley, Deccio, Berkey, McAuliffe, Keiser, Kline, Regala, Honeyford, Thibaudeau, Mulliken, Pridemore, Rockefeller, Delvin, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles.

#### **Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education** **House Committee on Education**

**Background:** Under federal and state law, school districts are required to provide a free and appropriate education to children who by reason of a disability need special education and related services. "Special education" means specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. "Related services" includes supportive services that help the child benefit from special education. Sometimes this means that school districts have an obligation to provide educational sign language/oral interpreters for deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

Currently, there is no law that requires educational interpreters to be certified or to meet standardized qualifications or competencies. There is a national and a state certification that may be obtained on a voluntary basis. A college degree is not a prerequisite for either certificate. There are three community college programs that offer classes to prepare for the tests but they train interpreters for adult-to-adult community settings and are not designed to meet the needs of children in the public school setting. Wenatchee Valley Community College recently established a two-year educational interpreter training program.

**Summary:** To the extent funds are appropriated, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must develop standards for educational interpreters of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The standards must focus on the specific skills and knowledge necessary to serve the communication needs of students. The SPI must recommend an implementation schedule for the standards.

When developing the standards, the SPI must convene an advisory committee including representatives of interpreters, interpreter educators, school district coordinators of deaf programs, leaders in the deaf community, and parents of deaf children.

The SPI must report on any standards developed for educational interpreters and must obtain formal legislative approval before implementing any standards for educational interpreters.

#### **Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	46	0
House	91	0

**Effective:** June 7, 2006