

SENATE No. 197

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James T. Welch

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act protecting consumers of sign language and oral interpretation and transliteration.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>James T. Welch</i>	<i>Hampden</i>	
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>4th Hampden</i>	<i>2/4/2019</i>

SENATE No. 197

By Mr. Welch, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 197) of James T. Welch and John C. Velis for legislation to protect consumers of sign language and oral interpretation and transliteration. Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act protecting consumers of sign language and oral interpretation and transliteration.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 191 of chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph at the end thereof:-

3 "Qualified interpreter," a person skilled in sign language or oral interpretation and
4 transliteration, has the ability to communicate accurately with a deaf or hard of hearing person
5 and is able to translate information to and from such person. The Massachusetts Commission for
6 the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall establish the standards by which interpreters shall be
7 determined to be qualified. Only those interpreters who meet the established standards and who
8 are registered as qualified by the commission shall be presumed to be qualified to provide
9 communication access on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the Commonwealth.

10 SECTION 2. Section 196 of said chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
11 inserting after the word "emergencies." in line 3, the following sentence:-

12 “Only interpreters registered by the commission shall be presumed to be qualified
13 interpreters within the Commonwealth as defined in section 191 of this Chapter, however, during
14 an emergency situation, after a bona fide attempt has been made to obtain a qualified interpreter,
15 a hospital or emergency service provider may use Video Remote Interpreting to facilitate
16 emergency interpreting service only until a qualified interpreter arrives on site.”

17 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect immediately upon enactment.