

AN ACT

Codification
District of
Columbia
Official Code

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IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize American Sign Language as the modern language of choice for many deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing persons and to recognize American Sign Language as a foreign language course eligible for credit and satisfaction of any foreign language education requirement.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "American Sign Language Recognition Act of 2001".

New Chapter
24A
Title 38

Sec. 2. Findings.

(a) American Sign Language ("ASL") is one of the top 4 widely used languages in the United States and Canada.

New
§ 38-2431

(b) The District of Columbia has over 20,000 deaf and hard of hearing residents, many of whom use ASL as their primary language.

(c) ASL has met the accepted linguistic criteria to qualify as a legitimate language in that it has a system of arbitrary symbols, grammatical signals, syntax, has a community of users, and it has undergone historical changes.

(d) Two-thirds of state legislatures in the United States recognize and accept ASL as a bona fide language.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

New
§ 38-2432

For the purposes of this act, the term:

(1) "American Sign Language" or "ASL" means a visual language that is separate and distinct from English and other languages, and uses the hands, arms, facial markers, and body movements to convey grammatical information.

(2) "ASLTA" means the American Sign Language Teachers Association.

(3) "Deaf" means the inability to hear or understand oral communication, with or without the assistance of amplification devices.

(4) "Deaf people" means persons who use ASL as their primary language to communicate.

(5) "Hard of hearing" means permanent hearing loss which is severe enough to necessitate the use of amplification devices to hear oral communication.

(6) "Professional certification" means a teacher has met the ASLTA professional level certification requirements specified in the standards section of the ASLTA Certification Procedures and Standards.

(7) "Provisional certification" means a teacher has met the minimum ASLTA provisional level certification requirements specified in the standards section of the ASLTA Certification Procedures and Standards.

(8) "Qualified certification" means a teacher has met the ASLTA qualified level certification requirements specified in the standards section of the ASLTA Certification Procedures and Standards.

Sec. 4. American Sign Language instruction.

New
§ 38-2433

(a) American Sign Language may be offered in elementary and secondary public schools, community colleges, and 4-year universities and colleges, as a modern foreign language for which credit may be given. In secondary public schools, where offered for credit, ASL courses may be taken to satisfy a foreign language requirement.

(b) The minimal requirement of ASL teachers in K-12 schools and 4-year universities and colleges shall be at least a college degree in teaching ASL or a degree in a field related to deaf people with an ASLTA professional level certification. The teacher shall have demonstrated the highest level of knowledge and skills in teaching ASL, including:

- (1) Knowledge of curriculum development;
- (2) Evaluation;
- (3) Linguistics; and
- (4) Theoretical and contemporary issues in the field of ASL.

(c) The minimal requirement of ASL teachers in community colleges or other educational programs shall be at least an ASLTA qualified level certification. The teacher shall have demonstrated proficiency knowledge of second-language teaching methodology, language activities, evaluation, and knowledge of ASL linguistics.

(d) The minimal requirement of ASL teachers in state service providers or agencies shall be at least a ASLTA provisional level certification. The teacher shall have demonstrated proficiency in ASL and basic knowledge about ASL teaching, including developing course outlines and lesson plans.

(e) The requirements of ASLTA certification shall be effective on January 17, 2002.

(f) The ASL curriculum for K-12, L1 users and L2 learners, shall be approved by the ASLTA effective January 1, 2003.

Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal

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impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

Sec. 6 Effective Date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), approval by the Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority as provided in section 203(a) of the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Act of 1995, approved April 17, 1995 (109 Stat. 116; D.C. Official Code § 47-392.03(a)), a 30-day period of Congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

Mayor
District of Columbia