

I would like the FCC to take into consideration some of the concerns I have with establishing a requirement to have any VRS provider only hire interpreters with an RID certification.

I am a Certified Deaf Interpreter with credentials from RID and have been interpreting professionally for the past 17 years. I am concerned that the FCC requirement to have VRs provider only hire RID certifications will limit opportunities for Deaf Interpreters to enter the VRS industry. Currently there are only 134 Deaf Interpreters nationwide certified by RID. There are over 500 Deaf Interpreters who are not certified by RID yet qualified by their states through their licensing bureau or quality assurance program such as the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Deaf Interpreter Screening. We currently have 11 state screened Deaf Interpreters who have gone through testing with MCDHH and not certified by RID. They are qualified to interpret various interpreting assignments. By limiting VRS employment to certified Deaf Interpreters, this means approximately 75 percent of Deaf Interpreters who are non-certified but QUALIFIED through their state will not be able to seek work within the VRS industry. We need to promote jobs for Deaf people by providing opportunities, not barriers. It is our goal to provide additional training and support to get those 75 percent of Deaf Interpreters to become nationally certified, it will not happen overnight. It takes years and years of training and support to become a nationally certified Interpreter.

I ask that FCC leave the responsibility of "qualifying" interpreters to the states that already have a testing system and licensing procedure in place.

Thank you,

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Certified Deaf Interpreter, RID