HOUSE . . . . . No. 4027

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Twelve

An Act establishing a bill of rights for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 198 the following section:-Section 198A. The commission shall determine or develop an assessment for communication proficiency in American Sign Language and oral/aural communication for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The commission shall also determine or develop an assessment for interpreting proficiency in American Sign Language for educational interpreters of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

SECTION 2. Section 1B of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “adaptation”, in line 125, the following paragraph:—The board shall provide information to schools concerning educational, medical, cultural and linguistic issues of deafness and hearing loss and shall ensure that schools meet the individual educational needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

SECTION 3. Section 38G of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “successor”, in line 246, the following two paragraphs:-

Competence in American Sign Language or oral/aural communication shall be a requirement for initial certification as a teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Such competence shall be verified through a communication proficiency assessment determined or developed by the Massachusetts commission for the deaf and hard of hearing and approved by the department.

A person who is certified as a teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing shall demonstrate continued competency in American Sign Language or oral/aural communication as a condition of renewal of certification.

24 SECTION 4. Educational interpreters that provide interpreting services to students who
25 are deaf and hard of hearing in educational settings shall be registered through the Massachusetts
26 commission for the deaf and hard of hearing. Existing staff members providing educational
27 interpreting services must register before the start of the 2013-2014 school year. New hires must
28 register with the commission no later than one week after employment begins and may register
29 prior to employment at any time.

30 No person shall be eligible for employment as an educational interpreter for students who
31 are deaf or hard of hearing by a school district, private special education school or education
32 collaborative unless such person is registered with the commission and has demonstrated
33 competence in American Sign Language interpretation. Such competence shall be determined by
34 the commission for the deaf and hard of hearing through an educational interpreter proficiency
35 assessment developed by the commission and approved by the department.