



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0245-2004, **Version:** *

Res. No. 245

Resolution calling upon the State of New York, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to recognize American Sign Language as a legitimate modern international language and to authorize public and independent institutions of higher education to offer American Sign Language as an academic course of study that will satisfy foreign language requirements at institutions of higher education across the state.

By Council Members Rivera, Barron, Gennaro, Gerson, Liu, Nelson, Seabrook and Weprin

Whereas, American Sign Language (“ASL”) is a complex visual-spatial language that is used by the deaf community in the United States and the English-speaking parts of Canada; and

Whereas, ASL is a linguistically, complete natural language with its own structure, syntax and grammar through which meaning is conveyed visually through hand shapes, signs and facial expressions; and

Whereas, ASL is recognized as the language of the American deaf community and is one of the top four widely used languages in the United States and Canada; and

Whereas, According to the National Center for Health Statistics, in 2001 there were an estimated 7 million adults in the United States who had a significant amount of difficulty hearing or who were considered deaf, comprising approximately 3.4% of the total adult population; and

Whereas, The Gallaudet Research Institute at Gallaudet University - an institution of higher education for deaf and hard of hearing people - reported in their Regional and National Summary Report of Data from the 2001-2002 Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth, that approximately 42,361 children nationwide had been identified by their schools as receiving educational services related to their deafness; and

Whereas, Approximately two-thirds of state legislatures have recognized and accepted ASL as a bona-

vide language; and

Whereas, Many states, including New York, now recognize ASL as a second language for the purpose of meeting high school graduation requirements; and

Whereas, Over 140 institutions of higher education across the United States, including Yale, Georgetown, New York University, the University of Rochester and the colleges of the State University of New York at Brockport, Buffalo, Geneseo and Oswego accept ASL as a foreign language academic course that will satisfy their foreign language requirement; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the State of New York, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department to recognize American Sign Language as a legitimate modern international language and to authorize public and independent institutions of higher education to offer American Sign Language as an academic course of study that will satisfy foreign language requirements at institutions of higher education across the state.

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