

No. 5

(House Joint Resolution 1)

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Teaching of Sign Language

FOR the purpose of requesting the Department of Education to study the feasibility of including the Language of Signs and/or other means of communication as part of the language curriculum in public schools.

Among the major handicapping conditions, deafness is probably the least understood. This is true, at least in part, because of the fact that deafness strikes at one of the most fundamental things that people do, which is to communicate.

Deafness tends to be an invisible handicap and its impact upon the individual is little appreciated or understood by the public-at-large.

Traditionally, one of the major problems facing deaf people has been the lack of public understanding. This results in a relative insensitivity to the basic needs and the special needs of this unique population.

Lack of public awareness and understanding also permits subtle, as well as overt discrimination. This discrimination affects almost all areas of a deaf person's social, economic, and educational life.

Public awareness of the problem of the deaf could be increased by educating young people in the public schools; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the State Department of Education study the feasibility of including the Language of Signs and/or other means of communication used by deaf persons to communicate as part of or an elective in the public school language curriculum; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, Honorable Marvin Mandel; the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, Dr. Neil Solomon; and the State Superintendent of Schools Designate, Honorable David W. Hornbeck.

Approved April 12, 1977.
