

1 **JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING EDUCATORS OF THE**
2 **DEAF AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS**

3 2018 GENERAL SESSION

4 STATE OF UTAH

5 **Chief Sponsor: Jani Iwamoto**

6 House Sponsor: Steve Eliason

8 **LONG TITLE**

9 **General Description:**

10 This resolution recognizes the efforts of educators of the deaf and American Sign
11 Language instructors and highlights the contributions of American Sign Language to
12 the culture of the state.

13 **Highlighted Provisions:**

14 This resolution:

- 15 ▶ highlights the history of American Sign Language in the United States;
- 16 ▶ expresses support for the Deaf Community in the state; and
- 17 ▶ recognizes the efforts of Utah's educators of the deaf and American Sign Language

18 instructors in sharing American Sign Language with students and community
19 members across the state.

20 **Special Clauses:**

21 None

23 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

24 WHEREAS, various forms of sign language were used throughout the United States
25 prior to 1817;

26 WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is believed to have primarily originated
27 in Hartford, Connecticut, when a father seeking help to educate his deaf daughter, Alice



28 Cogswell, sent Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to Europe to learn the pedagogy of formalized deaf
29 education in Europe;

30 WHEREAS, after being denied access to oral schools for the deaf in Great Britain, the
31 French Institut National de Jeunes Sourds de Paris offered to teach Gallaudet its manual
32 methods;

33 WHEREAS, an assistant at the school, Laurent Clerc, accompanied Gallaudet back to
34 the United States and together, along with Mason Cogswell, founded the first permanent school
35 for the deaf, the American School for the Deaf, in Hartford, Connecticut, on April 15, 1817;

36 WHEREAS, the establishment of the American School for the Deaf lead to the creation
37 of deaf schools across the country;

38 WHEREAS, knowledge of American Sign Language spread to these schools as well;

39 WHEREAS, on April 8, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed the charter for
40 Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the first school for the advanced education of the
41 deaf and hard of hearing in the world;

42 WHEREAS, the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind was established on August
43 26, 1884, as the educating body for deaf and hard of hearing students in Utah;

44 WHEREAS, despite widespread use, American Sign Language was not fully
45 legitimized until 1955 when the linguist William Stokoe demonstrated that the attributes of
46 American Sign Language are comparable to oral languages;

47 WHEREAS, on March 13, 1988, the Deaf President Now movement succeeded in
48 having I. King Jordan named the first deaf president of Gallaudet University;

49 WHEREAS, Americans celebrate Deaf History Month each year from March 13 to
50 April 15, straddling two months to recognize three key dates in deaf history: March 13, April 8,
51 and April 15;

52 WHEREAS, people across the country annually celebrate National American Sign
53 Language Day on April 15;

54 WHEREAS, Utah is continuing the legacy of educating deaf and hard of hearing
55 students established over the past 133 years through the work of the Utah Schools for the Deaf
56 and the Blind;

57 WHEREAS, American Sign Language education is a valuable scholastic resource for
58 many students in school districts across the state as exemplified by the ASL program at Skyline

59 High School, which enhances classroom study with opportunities to engage students from the
60 Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and the community through activities such as plays
61 performed in ASL; and

62 WHEREAS, current studies estimate American Sign Language to be the third most
63 used language in the United States:

64 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
65 declares its support for the state's Deaf Community and the rich, vibrant language it adds to our
66 culture.

67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature recognizes the tireless efforts of
68 Utah's American Sign Language educators and educators of the deaf and hard of hearing who
69 share the beauty of ASL with deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing students and community
70 members across the state.

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel