

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 889

Short Title: American Sign Language.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Martin of Guilford and Cooper.

Referred to: Children & Human Resources.

April 16, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO RECOGNIZE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) AS THE MODERN LANGUAGE OF CHOICE FOR MANY DEAF, HARD-OF-HEARING AND HEARING NORTH CAROLINA CITIZENS.

Whereas, American Sign Language (ASL) is one of the top four widely used languages in the United States and Canada; and

Whereas, North Carolina has over 50,000 deaf citizens, most of whom use ASL as their primary language; and

Whereas, ASL has met the accepted linguistic criteria to qualify it as a legitimate language in that it has a system of arbitrary symbols, grammatical signals, and syntax, it has a community of users, and it has undergone historical changes; and

Whereas, more than one-half of the state legislatures in the United States have recognized and accepted American Sign Language as a language; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. A new Chapter is added to the General Statutes to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 103A.**

**"RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.**

**"§ 103A-1. Definitions.**

The following definitions shall apply in this Chapter:

- 1           (1) 'American Sign Language (ASL)' means a visual language that is a  
2           separate and distinct language involving the hands, arms, facial markers,  
3           and body movements to convey grammatical information.  
4           (2) 'Deaf people' refers to people who use American Sign Language as their  
5           primary language to communicate in their respective cultural groups.  
6           (3) 'Deaf' means the inability to hear and/or understand oral  
7           communications, with or without assistance of amplification devices.