



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 20, 2019

Contact: Rep. Skowronski, (608) 266-8590

Rep. Brostoff, (608) 266-0650

Rep. Thiesfeldt, (608) 266-3156

Rep. Kolste, (608) 266-7503

## **Legislators Cheer Passage of Landmark Bill to Protect Wisconsin's Deaf and Interpreter Communities**

*Skowronski, Brostoff, Thiesfeldt, and Kolste Applaud Passage of AB 250*

MADISON - Reps. Ken Skowronski (R-Franklin), Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee), Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R-Fond du Lac), and Debra Kolste (D-Janesville) released the following statement in response to the passage of Assembly Bill 250 earlier today:

“We are incredibly pleased to see this important legislation pass the Assembly yet again. Not only will this bill provide landmark protections for Deaf Wisconsinites, but it will expand the ranks of qualified sign language interpreters across our state,” said Brostoff.

Skowronski added, “This bill is long overdue - both the Deaf and interpreter communities in our State have been underserved for far too long, and both of these communities deserve this bill. No one should face health and safety risks, or the threat of losing their job, due to governmental inaction. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has worked on this bill and brought us to this point, and I am looking forward to seeing it make its way through the Senate and then on to the Governor’s desk.”

AB 250 provides for a more appropriate scope of practice for sign language interpreters in Wisconsin, gives more protections for members of the Deaf community, and helps provide the level of access that members of the Deaf community in Wisconsin deserve. Furthermore, AB 250 helps attract new and retain current sign language interpreters by increasing access to sign language interpreter licensure exams in Wisconsin.

“Shockingly, we are currently seeing aspiring sign language interpreters shut out of their field due to lack of access to licensing exams, and existing interpreters are losing their licenses for the same reason. I firmly believe that, when people want to work, we should give them those opportunities. AB 250 will increase those opportunities, and will put more Wisconsin citizens to work, especially in helping the deaf community,” said Thiesfeldt.

“Health, safety, and good jobs are things that we as legislators should strive to promote and provide for our constituents and people across our State - this bill does just that, and I am incredibly proud to support it,” ended Kolste.

AB 250 now awaits action in the Wisconsin State Senate.

###