

Latin American Coalition
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Charlotte, NC 28205
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Muslim American Society of Charlotte
4301 Shamrock Drive
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Vietnamese Coalition of Charlotte
[no contact info found]

Gentlemen:

I write as chair of the Advocacy Committee of NAJIT, the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. NAJIT's mission is to promote quality services in the field of legal interpreting and translating. Our members play a critical role in assuring due process, equal protection, and equal access for non-English or limited English proficient (LEP) individuals who interact with the judicial system.

NAJIT is the largest American organization of judiciary interpreters and translators. Our aims include: the promotion of professional standards of performance and integrity for court and legal interpreters and translators; wider recognition for the profession of judiciary interpreting and translating; and the enunciation of positions on matters affecting the advancement and interest of the profession of court and legal interpreting as whole. NAJIT's Advocacy Committee is charged with monitoring national events and intervening where possible to forward the aims of NAJIT.

We believe that it is well established in American law that LEP persons are entitled by the Constitution (e.g., Amendments V and VI and XIV), by Federal statute (Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964), by Executive Order 13166, and by Obama Administration policy, to language assistance in all legal settings, including criminal court, civil court, and quasi-legal administrative settings.

Although the court interpreter is commonly viewed as an aide to the LEP individual before the court, in fact she acts as an officer of the court and is ethically bound to be neutral and impartial. The expectation that the interpreter is to be paid by the LEP individual creates a real or perceived conflict of interest on the part of the interpreter. Interpreter ethics require us to avoid such conflicts; their existence creates an ethical dilemma and endangers the fairness of the judicial system.

We have become aware of the complaint you filed recently with the U.S. Department of Justice. News reports indicate that you are complaining that North Carolina fails to provide interpreters

for LEP persons in civil matters, and that the state also has not translated important forms and website information.

We would like to work with you in any way useful, and we offer our assistance in preparing briefs and testimony. Please contact our Chair, Mr. Robert Cruz, at the above address or telephone at your convenience.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John M. Estill". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Very truly yours,".

John M. Estill
Chair, NAJIT Advocacy Committee