



National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators  
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Esteemed NAJIT members, colleagues, and court administrators;

The NAJIT Board is deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of court interpreters - both employees and independent contractors. The recent deaths reported in Southern California, Hawaii and other states have brought this issue to the forefront. Interpreters are an integral part of the justice system and often have much closer contact with inmates and the general public than other court personnel.

From the very beginning of the pandemic, NAJIT has encouraged caution and the use of equipment that mitigates the risk to interpreters. We applaud the efforts of courts that have implemented technological solutions to hold hearings remotely, thereby protecting interpreters, court personnel, and the general public. There is no justification for interpreters to be put in harm's way when the technology exists for interpreters to work from a booth-like setting or from another courtroom if they need to be physically present. In fact, working remotely from the safety of their own homes should be the preferred modality under these unique circumstances.

The NAJIT Board strongly urges courts to implement solutions that keep interpreters safe. Although there are current laws in place, including an Executive Order recently signed by President Biden that allow employees to refuse work in conditions they feel are unsafe, our freelance - per diem colleagues should not have to choose between making a living or protecting their health during a pandemic.

NAJIT has the knowledge and resources to train court personnel in the use of remote interpreting platforms and the Board of Directors stands ready to help courts find solutions that allow for continued language access while protecting the life, health, and wellbeing of our colleagues.

Sincerely,

The NAJIT Board of Directors