

COMMITTEE NEWS

Committee Appointments

The Board of Directors has made the following appointments of committee chairs, valid through May 20, 2006:

- Advocacy Committee – Dr. Alexander Rainof
- Bylaws and Governance Committee – D. Hal Sillers
- Conference Committee – Odile Legeay and Cristina Helmerichs D.
- Education Committee – Karen Borgenheimer and Michael Kagan
- Elections Committee – Susan Castellanos-Bilodeau and Joyce Y. García
- Position Papers Subcommittee – Isabel Framer
- Student Outreach Committee – Vanesa Ieraci
- Tape Translation and Transcription Project (as previously announced) – Teresa Salazar and Gladys Segal

Committee Chairmanships Open

Membership, Publications, Website

The Board of Directors invites interested NAJIT members to submit applications for service as Chair of the Membership, Publications, or Website committees. Letters of interest may be mailed or faxed to headquarters or emailed to volunteers@najit.org. Visit the Member Portal in the website to learn details of each committee's work, or request further information by email or telephone. The board hopes to appoint these committee chairs by October 2005.

Advocacy Committee Report

March 31, 2005

The Honorable Gloria Negrete McLeod
Chair, Business and Professions Committee
California State Assembly

RE: AB 775, Prohibiting the Use of Children as Interpreters in Medical Settings

Dear Assemblymember Negrete McLeod:

On behalf of the National Association for Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, I urge you to support passage of Assembly Bill 775, prohibiting the use of children as interpreters in hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices.

It has become all too common for children to be used as interpreters as a matter of convenience for service providers. The effects on children can be devastating, and they should not be used as intermediaries in medical situations. They become integral participants in inappropriate situations that could be potentially traumatizing to them. The possibility of misinformation and error due to a child's ignorance and embarrassment provide additional strong incentive to remove children from bearing such a heavy burden. It can also lead to critical and even life-threatening outcomes.

AB 775 creates policy appropriate for California, reflecting our diversity and our responsibility to and for our children. Please register our support for this sensible and sensitive legislation.

Sincerely,
Alexander Rainof, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Directors

April 19, 2005

The Honorable Speaker Fabian Núñez
State Capitol, California

RE: AB 1196 California State Seal of Bilingualism

Dear Speaker Núñez and Members of the Assembly:

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) strongly supports passage of AB1196 (Coto) establishing a California State Seal of Bilingualism to be awarded to high school graduates who have mastered one or more languages in addition to English.

California is the most linguistically diverse state in the nation. The need for bilingual candidates in the profession of interpreting and translating has never been greater. California's courts, administrative offices and medical facilities are experiencing a critical shortage of qualified employees who possess adequate communications and literacy skills in languages in addition to English. The result is that many citizens and residents are not receiving services to which they are entitled. Passage of this bill would assist employers and others in identifying bilingual candidates for jobs and professional preparation programs. It would make a symbolic commitment to California's rich and diverse language assets and help change the orientation of language diversity into one that views multilingualism as value-added.

The numbers of foreign language students in California is diminishing at a time when the California K-16 Master Plan for Education is calling for students to graduate literate in one or more languages in addition to English. Passage of this bill would help revitalize foreign language instruction in California K-12 schools which would lead to a better prepared workforce for the 21st century, and to more successful global citizens.

Sincerely,
Alexander Rainof, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Directors

June 7, 2005

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of the State of Texas

Dear Governor Perry:

On behalf of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, I write to urge you to veto House Bill 1642. This bill authorizes counties with a population of over 50,000, which were previously required to use licensed interpreters during court proceedings, to forego that requirement if a licensed interpreter is not available within 75 miles.

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