Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee for allowing me the opportunity to address you here today. My name is Micki Baumgart from Pinckney, MI and I am in full support of this HB4208.

I am the president of the Michigan chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Our specific purposes are to advance the professional standards of interpreters/transliterators, and promote the professional skills, interests, and welfare of our members.

We conduct skill enhancement workshops, encourage professional development, and model ethical behavior to new interpreters, working interpreters, and students of our interpreter training programs statewide.

We also have Deaf members who participate fully in these activities. We provide such members with only certified interpreters at our events, ensuring equal and quality access to the valuable information being shared.

As a state affiliate chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, we adhere to the same Code of Professional Conduct as has been previously discussed. The unfortunate fact is that not every interpreter working in the state of Michigan chooses to be a member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. As such, those individuals feel exempt from the need to follow our Code of Professional Conduct. These interpreters can (and do!) accept assignments for which they are <u>not</u> adequately qualified, which compromises the value of the entire certification structure, not to mention the serious consequences suffered by the Deaf consumer who's not getting accurate information.

After all the information we've heard in the testimonies here today, the one final point I'd like to offer is this:

(If your Dr was giving you your prognosis and this is all you could see, would you be concerned?)

Now, did any of you understand what I just said? We can only imagine how it must feel for the Deaf person who has no choice but to trust and rely upon an interpreter who's skill level is unknown or unverified. Costly mistakes can (and do!) occur at doctor visits, job interviews, and even at any of your own campaign rallies! I'm sure you would insist on knowing that the interpreter had conveyed your intended message accurately to the Deaf constituents in the audience. If not, those Deaf voters may not support you at the polls because they hadn't understood your message clearly. And you'd never know just how many Deaf people were in that audience. With this law, we'd finally have the "teeth" necessary to ensure that interpreters providing the communication link between deaf and hearing citizens at all levels and in all arenas are qualified to do so.

Respectfully submitted,

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