



Education Committee

February 18, 2016

Senate Bill. No. 444

Rosie Cooper

KACIL Executive Director

Member Agencies:

**Coalition for
Independence**

Kansas City, KS
913/321-5140 Voice/TT

**Independent Living
Resource Center**

Wichita, KS
316/942-6300 Voice/TT

Independence, Inc.

Lawrence, KS
785/841-0333 Voice
785/841-1046 TT

Independent Connection

Salina, KS
785-452-9580 Voice/TDD

LINK, Inc.

Hays, KS
785/625-6942 Voice/TT

**Prairie Independent
Living Resource Center**

Hutchinson, KS
620/663-3989 Voice

**Resource Center for
Independent Living, Inc.**

Osage City, KS
785/528-3105 Voice
785/528-3106 TT

**Southeast Kansas
Independent Living, Inc.**

Parsons, KS
620/421-5502 Voice
620/421-6551 TT

The Whole Person, Inc.

Kansas City, MO
816/561-0304 Voice
816/627-2201 TT

Three Rivers ILC

Wamego, KS
785/456-9915 Voice

Chairman Abrams and committee members, my name is Rosie Cooper, I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living (KACIL). The members of KACIL gladly offer our support to the passage of SB 444. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) serve people with all disabilities from ages zero to death. The most common service we provide to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing is individual advocacy. Nine times out of ten the root of their problem is communication. They receive written notifications what do not understand and therefore they do not act upon.

For example, a landlord places a notice on a person's door stating they are required to make sure their dog does not bark after 9pm. The issue escalates because they cannot decipher the written notice due to low English language skills. They have no idea there is a problem until they are about to be evicted. CILs help them understand what was written and the problem gets solved.

Apply that same scenario to employment and you have someone who cannot fully understand the employee manual or memos instructing company changes.

Imagine if you will trying to read the side effect labels on medicine, nutrition labels on food, a recipe, a map, the list goes on and on.

The assessment and tracking currently utilized for children zero to 8 years does not include ASL along with English. It is only when individuals are literate in both languages that the struggles with illiteracy, unemployment and dependency on government benefits disappear.

This bill will allow Deaf and hard of hearing children access to develop the language skills required for higher education, employment, and true integrated community living. We ask for your support on SB 444.

Respectfully submitted by: Rosie Cooper