Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I reside in your district and am emailing to ask you to support**HB.3979 (Rep. Cabral) SB S.2494 (Sen.Crighton) An Act Relative to the Training, Assessment, and Assignment of Qualified Interpreters in Educational Settings.**This bill directs the MA Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate regulations establishing standards for interpreters in educational settings similar to those which exist for court and medical interpreters. Massachusetts needs this legislation because communication between schools and families is critical to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for the **nearly 30% of students across the Commonwealth who come from families whose first language is not English**.

Unfortunately, too frequently, schools depend on bilingual school staff to interpret for families with limited English proficiency, although such staff lack knowledge of specialized terminology, the role of the interpreter, or the ethics of interpretation, including confidentiality. This leads to misinformation, mistrust, and exclusion of families with limited English proficiency from participating in their children’s education. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities with the highest percentages of families whose first language is not English poses another serious hurdle to overcome in **closing the achievement gap for English learners**. Qualified interpreters are crucial to ensuring that districts are able to engage with **all families as partners** in addressing their children’s educational needs.

This bill is based on unanimously approved recommendations regarding the qualifications of school interpreters that were issued by a DESE-led task force that included school administrators, educators, and parents and is subject to appropriation. Please support **HB.3979/SB S.2494**to ensure that Massachusetts students whose parents have limited English proficiency have equal educational opportunities.Please see the [fact sheet and bill summary](https://www.massadvocates.org/interpreter-bill) for more information. Thank you for all of your work.

Your Name and address