

# The Connecticut General Assembly



**For Immediate Release**

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## LEGISLATION WILL RESTORE "ONE-STOP" HUB OF SERVICES FOR DEAF COMMUNITY

**Speaker of the House Matt Ritter (D-Hartford)**, House Chair of the Human Services Committee **Rep. Jillian Gilchrest (D-West Hartford)**, **Rep. Chris Poulos (Southington)**, and advocates today unveiled a proposal to establish the *Bureau of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Services* under the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services.

**Dr. Harvey Corson**, the Chair of the Education and Legislative Committee of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, said, "We commend Speaker Matt Ritter and the legislators for considering this proposal of establishing a Bureau of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Services under the Department of Aging and Disability Services. This will greatly improve communication access as well as information and resources to Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing individuals and family members, the public and other state and local agencies."

Prior to its closing in 2016, services for the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing community were coordinated by the Commission for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. Since the commission's dissolution, services have been decentralized.

"Finding state services became more complicated and the bureaucracy harder to navigate over the past decade," Speaker Ritter said. "Creating the Bureau of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Services will allow Connecticut residents a 'one-stop shop' where they can ask questions, receive assistance, and be directed to the services they are searching for."

"I am in full support of the creation of this bureau to improve services and quality of life by addressing the unique needs of this population," Rep. Gilchrest said. "I thank Speaker Ritter and am looking forward to making this a reality."

Because most of the services are already funded and performed by the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the creation of the Bureau is expected to cost approximately \$250,000/year for an executive director and one or two support positions.

"As an advocate of improving and streamlining access to resources and services for the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing community, I support the establishment of this bureau, and thank Speaker Ritter and State Advisory Board Task Force for bringing this proposal forward to create a centralized hub," said Rep. Poulos.

The legislative action is recommended by the State Advisory Board Task Force on Needs Assessment of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Persons (which Dr. Corson chaired). 37 states (not including Connecticut) have state agencies that primarily serve deaf or hard of hearing people.