AN ACT concerning the Kansas department for children and families; relating to the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing; executive director duties; registration of interpreters; rules and regulation authority; amending K.S.A. 75-4355a and K.S.A. 75-5391, 75-5393 and 75-5397a and repealing the existing sections.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

New Section 1. (a) Registration in accordance with this section shall be required to interpret under K.S.A. 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments thereto, or to comply with any state or federal law or rules and regulations.

(b) To obtain registration as an interpreter, an applicant shall submit an application on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commission. The commission may grant registration to any person who:

1. Has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent;
2. Is 18 years of age or older;
3. Has no other record of disqualifying conduct as designated by the commission; and
4. Has obtained a certification or other appropriate credentials as designated by the commission.

(c) (1) The commission may grant registration as an interpreter to an applicant who has been duly licensed or registered as an interpreter by examination under the laws of another state, territory or the District of Columbia if, in the opinion of the commission, the applicant substantially meets the qualifications for registration as an interpreter in this state. The applicant shall provide satisfactory evidence of verification of the applicant's licensure or registration from the original state of licensure or registration.

(2) The commission may grant temporary registration to a nonresident interpreter who holds a certificate or license in such person or entity's state of residence. An interpreter granted a temporary registration
shall not interpret more than 20 separate days in a year in this state.

(d) (1) The commission shall charge and collect in advance fees provided for in this section as fixed by the commission by rules and regulations. Registrations issued under the provisions of this section shall expire on the date established by rules and regulations of the commission unless revoked prior to that time. The commission shall send a notice for renewal of registration to every interpreter at least 60 days prior to the expiration date of such person's registration.

(2) (A) If an interpreter fails to submit a renewal application prior to the expiration date of such person's registration, such interpreter's registration shall be deemed expired. A registered interpreter has a 30-day grace period after a registration has expired to renew such registration without a late fee. The late fee shall be set by the commission, but shall not exceed $200.

(B) An interpreter whose registration has expired after failing to submit a renewal application may register upon payment of the late fee and submitting satisfactory evidence of completion of continuing education requirements established by the commission. Renewals of expired registrations may include additional testing, training or education as the commission deems necessary to establish the person's present ability to perform the functions and responsibilities of an interpreter.

(3) An interpreter, as a condition for renewal of a registration, shall be required to attend not less than 30 hours, biennially, of continuing education units. The commission shall adopt rules and regulations establishing requirements for such programs. Upon receipt of such application, payment of fee and evidence of satisfactory completion of the required continuing education, the commission shall verify the accuracy of the application and grant renewal of the registration.

(4) The commission may sponsor continuing education programs and establish and charge reasonable fees for such activities.

(e) (1) The commission may require an applicant for certification as an interpreter to be fingerprinted and to submit to a state and national criminal history record check. The fingerprints shall be used to identify the applicant and to determine whether the applicant has a record of criminal history in this state or another jurisdiction. The commission is authorized to submit the fingerprints to the Kansas bureau of investigation and the federal bureau of investigation for a state and national criminal history record check. The commission may use the information obtained from fingerprinting and the applicant's criminal history for purposes of verifying the identification of the applicant and making the official determination of the qualifications and fitness of the application to be issued or maintain registration.

(2) Local and state law enforcement officers and agencies shall assist
the commission in taking the fingerprints of applicants for registration. Local and state law enforcement officers and agencies may charge a fee as reimbursement for expenses incurred in taking and processing fingerprints under this section. The Kansas bureau of investigation shall release all records of an applicant's adult convictions to the commission.

(3) The commission may fix and collect a fee for fingerprinting and conducting a state and national criminal history record check of applicants or registrants as may be required by the commission in an amount equal to the cost of fingerprinting and the criminal history record check.

(f) The commission may refuse to issue, renew or reinstate a registration, may condition, limit, revoke or suspend the registration of any individual if the applicant or registrant:

(1) Has been found incompetent or negligent in the practice of interpreting;

(2) has been convicted of a felony offense or a misdemeanor against persons and has not demonstrated to the commission's satisfaction that such person has been sufficiently rehabilitated to merit the public trust;

(3) submits an application that contains false, misleading or incomplete information;

(4) fails or refuses to provide any information requested by the commission;

(5) fails or refuses to pay the required fees;

(6) is currently listed on a child abuse registry or an adult protective services registry as the result of a substantiated finding of abuse or neglect by any state agency, agency of another state or the United States, territory of the United States or another country, and the applicant or registrant has not demonstrated to the commission's satisfaction that such person has been sufficiently rehabilitated to merit the public trust; or

(7) has had a license, registration or certificate to practice as an interpreter revoked, suspended or limited, or has been the subject of other disciplinary action, or an application for a license, registration or certificate denied, by the proper regulatory authority of another state, territory, District of Columbia, or other country, a certified copy of the record of the action of the other jurisdiction being conclusive evidence thereof.

(g) Administrative proceedings and disciplinary actions regarding interpreter registration under sections 1 through 3, and amendments thereto, shall be conducted in accordance with the Kansas administrative procedure act. Judicial review and civil enforcement of agency actions under sections 1 through 3, and amendments thereto, shall be in accordance with the Kansas judicial review act.

(h) In accordance with the rules and regulations filing act, the executive director of the commission may adopt rules and regulations to
effectuate the provisions of this section. Such rules and regulations may include, but not be limited to, provisions concerning:

(1) Fees necessary to fund the expenses and operating costs incurred in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this section;

(2) categories of interpreter certification and interpreter endorsements, including necessary credentials or qualifications;

(3) a continuing education program for registered interpreters;

(4) a code of professional conduct;

(5) a supervision and mentorship program for interpreters with provisional registration;

(6) suspension or revocation of interpreter registration; and

(7) any other matter deemed necessary by the executive director to implement and administer the provisions of this section.

New Sec. 2. (a) It shall be unlawful for any person who is not registered with the commission, or whose registration has been suspended or revoked, to:

(1) Practice as an interpreter;

(2) hold out to the public the intention, authority or skill to interpret;

(3) provide video remote interpreting services; or

(4) use any title or abbreviation to indicate the person is a registered interpreter with the commission.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any entity to:

(1) Cause or permit a person to interpret in Kansas, either in-person or remotely, with knowledge that such person is not a registered interpreter;

(2) represent that a person is a registered interpreter, when the entity knows or reasonably should know that such person is not a registered interpreter;

(3) hold out to the public, on behalf of a person, the intention, skill or authority to interpret, when the entity knows or reasonably should know that such person is not a registered interpreter; or

(4) accept payment for securing an interpreter under the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments thereto, when the person provided by the entity to interpret is not a registered interpreter.

(c) This section shall not apply to a person or entity if such person or entity is:

(1) Interpreting during a religious event;

(2) interpreting as a volunteer without compensation after receiving approval from the commission or the executive director;

(3) interpreting during an emergency, until the services of a registered interpreter can be obtained; or

(4) a student who is enrolled in and pursuing a degree or credential in interpreting or an interpreter training program or a provisional interpreter
with a supervision plan overseen by the commission, while such student or
provisional interpreter is under the supervision of a registered interpreter.
(d) When it appears to the commission that any person or entity is
violating the provisions of this section, the commission may bring an
action in the name of the state of Kansas in a court of competent
jurisdiction for an injunction against such violation without regard to
whether proceedings have been or may be instituted before the
commission or whether criminal proceedings have been or may be
instituted.

New Sec. 3. (a) The commission shall develop and administer a
program to provide guidelines for the utilization of communication
access services, communication access service providers, and interpreter
service agencies. In accordance with the rules and regulations filing act,
the executive director of the commission may adopt rules and regulations
to effectuate the provisions of this section, which may include, but not be
limited to, provisions concerning:
(1) Fees necessary to fund the expenses and operating costs incurred
in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this section;
(2) determination of the qualifications of communication access
service providers;
(3) minimum standards of training of communication access service
providers;
(4) registration of communication access service providers and
interpreter service agencies;
(5) a code of professional conduct governing communication access
service providers;
(6) standards for equipment or technology supporting communication
access services;
(8) a system of statewide coordination of communication access
services; and
(9) any other matter that the executive director deems necessary to
implement and administer the provisions of this section.
(b) (1) The commission may require communication access service
providers to be fingerprinted and to submit to a state and national criminal
history record check. The fingerprints shall be used to identify the
applicant and to determine whether the applicant has a record of criminal
history in this state or another jurisdiction. The commission is authorized
to submit the fingerprints to the Kansas bureau of investigation and the
federal bureau of investigation for a state and national criminal history
record check. The commission may use the information obtained from
fingerprinting and the applicant's criminal history for purposes of verifying
the identification of any individual and in the official determination of the
qualifications and fitness of the individual to provide communication
access services.

(2) Local and state law enforcement officers and agencies shall assist the commission in taking the fingerprints of individuals. Local and state law enforcement officers and agencies may charge a fee as reimbursement for expenses incurred in taking and processing fingerprints under this section. The Kansas bureau of investigation shall release all records of an individual's adult convictions to the commission.

(3) The commission may fix and collect a fee for fingerprinting and conducting a state and national criminal history record check of individuals pursuant to this section as may be required by the commission in an amount equal to the cost of fingerprinting and the criminal history record check.

New Sec. 4. (a) The commission shall remit all moneys received from fees, charges or penalties under sections 1 through 3, and amendments thereto, to the state treasurer in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and amendments thereto. Upon receipt of each such remittance, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount into the state treasury to the credit of the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing registration fee fund.

(b) There is hereby created in the state treasury the commission for deaf and hard of hearing registration fee fund. All moneys credited to the fund shall be used to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the commission. The fund shall be administered by the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing. All expenditures from the fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the executive director of the commission or the executive director's designee.

New Sec. 5. (a) As used in K.S.A 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments thereto, and sections 1 through 5, and amendments thereto:

(1) "Commission" means the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing;

(2) "communication access services" includes, but is not limited to: Communication access realtime translation services, notetakers, open and closed captioning services, support service providers for the deaf-blind, and any other effective method of making aurally delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;

(3) "communication access service provider" means an individual who is trained to offer a communication access service to communicate aurally delivered information to individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired have speech and language impairments;

(4) "executive director" means the executive director for the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing;

(5) "interpreter" means an individual who engages in the practice of
interpreting;
(6) "interpreter service agency" means an entity that contracts with or employs registered interpreters to provide interpreter services, whether in person or remotely, for a fee;
(7) "interpreting" means the translating or transliterating of English concepts to any communication modes of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired have speech and language impairments or the translating or transliterating of the communication modes of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired have speech and language impairments to English language concepts. Communication modes include, but are not limited to, American sign language, English-based sign language, cued speech, oral transliterating and information received tactually;
(8) "video remote interpreter" means an interpreter who engages in the practice of video remote interpreting; and
(9) "video remote interpreting" means the process that allows an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to communicate with a hearing individual at the same location through an interpreter displayed through videoconferencing or similar technology.

Sec. 6. K.S.A. 75-4355a is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-4355a. A qualified interpreter registered with the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing shall be secured for any person who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired in any grand jury, court or jury proceeding whether such person is a plaintiff, defendant, juror or witness in such action, and the interpreter shall interpret throughout the actual trial and during the time that the jury is sequestered or engaged in its deliberations.

Sec. 7. K.S.A. 75-4355b is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-4355b. (a) All interpreters for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired individuals that have speech and language impairments, secured under the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments thereto, or in compliance with any state or federal law or rules and regulations, shall be certified by or registered with the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing or an agency designated by the commission. The chairperson of the governmental committee or commission, or the head of the governmental agency or other entity, or the court is responsible for assuring the procurement of the interpreter.
(b) The commission shall recommend reasonable fees for the services of the interpreter. At no time shall the fees for interpreter services be assessed against the person who is deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired has speech and language impairments.
(c) No person shall serve as an interpreter if such interpreter is married to that person, related to that person or is otherwise interested in
the outcome of the proceeding. Exceptions can be made in extreme 
conditions, subject to the approval of the commission.

(d) No person shall serve as an interpreter pursuant to K.S.A. 75-
4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments thereto, unless the commission 
makes the determination that the person is qualified to interpret. The 
commission may designate the executive director of the commission or a 
local agency to make such determination and approval under the 
provisions of K.S.A. 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments 
thereof. A person is qualified to interpret if such person is able to interpret 
effectively, accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, 
using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

(e) If preferred by the deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired person 
and if feasible, other modes of communication, such as notetakers, open-
captioning equipment, assistive listening devices access services or other 
technology may be used in place of an interpreter.

Sec. 8. K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 75-5391 is hereby amended to read as 
follows: 75-5391. (a) There is hereby established within the Kansas 
department for children and families the Kansas commission for the deaf 
and hard of hearing. The commission shall:

(1) Advocate services affecting the deaf and hard of hearing in the 
areas of public services, health care, educational, vocational and 
employment opportunity;

(2) act as a bureau of information for the deaf and hard of hearing to 
state agencies and public institutions providing general health and mental 
health care, employment, vocational, and educational services, and to local 
agencies and programs;

(3) collect facts and statistics and other special studies of conditions 
affecting the health and welfare of the deaf and hard of hearing in this 
state;

(4) provide for a mutual exchange of ideas and information on the 
national, state and local levels;

(5) provide public education of prenatal and postnatal warning signs 
of conditions which may lead to deafness or hearing impairment in the 
fetus or newborn child: (A) Regarding best practices in language 
an acquisition development in deaf and hard of hearing children and aural 
rehabilitation options; and (B) to promote the eradication of ignorance 
and discrimination toward deaf and hard of hearing people in schools 
and employment;

(6) encourage and assist local governments in the development of 
programs for the deaf and hard of hearing;

(7) cooperate with public and private agencies and units of local, state 
and federal governments in promoting coordination in programs for the 
deaf and hard of hearing;
(8) provide for the social, emotional, educational and vocational
needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and their families;
(9) serve as an advisory board to the governor and legislature on the
needs of the deaf and hard of hearing by preparing an annual report which
reviews the status of all state services to the deaf and hard of hearing
within Kansas, and to recommend priorities to the governor for the
development and coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing;
(10) make recommendations for needed improvements, and serve as
an advisory board in regard to new legislation affecting the deaf and hard
of hearing.

(b) The commission may:
(1) Develop and oversee programs concerning interpreters,
interpreter service agencies, and communication access services;
(2) become a member of or affiliate with any professional
organization related to the powers, duties and functions of the
commission; and
(3) undertake any and all other acts as may be necessary for the
performance of the commission's powers, duties and functions in the
administration of K.S.A. 75-4355a through 75-4355d, and amendments
thereto, and sections 1 through 5, and amendments thereto.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by this act, all budgeting,
purchasing and related management functions of the Kansas commission
for the deaf and hard of hearing shall be administered under the direction
and supervision of by the secretary for children and families. Within the
limitations of available appropriations, the secretary for children and
families shall provide additional clerical and other assistance as may be
required for the commission. The Kansas commission for the deaf and
hard of hearing shall report directly to the deputy secretary or secretary.

Sec. 9. K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 75-5393 is hereby amended to read as
follows: 75-5393. (a) The Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of
hearing shall employ an executive director and shall fix the duties,
responsibilities and qualifications thereof. The executive director shall be a
full-time employee of the commission who shall be in the unclassified
service under the Kansas civil service act and shall receive an annual
salary to be fixed by the commission, which shall be comparable to the:
salaries of executive directors of other commissions. The executive
director shall receive actual and necessary expenses incurred while in the
discharge of official duties.

(b) The executive director, with the advice and consent of the
commission shall:
(1) Within the limitations of available appropriations, plan and
oversee the establishment of service centers for the deaf and hard of
hearing in areas where the commission deems they are needed and in
concurrence with the secretary for children and families and in
consultation with local boards of directors of community service centers
and local groups promoting or providing services to the deaf or hard of
hearing, or both;

(2) promote accessibility of all governmental services to deaf and
hard of hearing citizens in Kansas including those deaf and hard of hearing
persons with multiple disabilities;

(3) identify agencies, both public and private which provide
community services, evaluate the extent to which they make services
available to deaf and hard of hearing people and their families, and
cooperate with the agencies in coordinating and extending these services;

(4) provide for the mutual exchange of ideas and information on
services for deaf and hard of hearing people between federal, state and
local governmental agencies and private organizations and individuals;

(5) survey the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing population in
Kansas and assist the commission in the preparation of its report to the
governor;

(6) maintain a listing of persons qualified in various types of
interpreting and aural rehabilitation communication access services for the
deaf and make this information available to local, state, federal and private
organizations and to individuals;

(7) promote the training of interpreters for the deaf and hard of
hearing;

(8) serve as an advocate for the rights of deaf and hard of hearing
people and perform such other duties as may be required by law;

(9) provide interpreter services for the deaf and hard of hearing to be
funded from user fees collected pursuant to K.S.A. 75-5397a, and
amendments thereto;

(10) provide a telecommunication message relay service for the deaf
and hard of hearing;

(11) provide for a program of regulation and certification registration
of interpreters; and

(12) provide for a program of statewide coordination for
communication access services and service providers; and

(13) employ such persons as may be needed from time to time, in the
judgment of the executive director, to carry out the director's
responsibilities under paragraphs (9), (10), and (11) and (12) of this
subsection. Such employees shall be in the unclassified civil service and
shall receive an annual salary to be fixed by the commission.

(c) In selecting an executive director, the commission shall select an
individual who is fluent in the American sign language of the deaf and
shall give consideration and priority to qualified applicants who are deaf or
hard of hearing. The commission shall supervise and evaluate the
Sec. 10. K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 75-5397a is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-5397a. (a) The Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing may fix, charge and collect reasonable fees for providing interpreter services, interpreter certification, communication access services and sign language instruction.

(b) The secretary for children and families shall remit all moneys received by the commission for providing interpreter services, communication access services and sign language instruction to the state treasurer in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and amendments thereto. Upon receipt of each such remittance, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury to the credit of the Kansas department for children and families enterprise fund.

Sec. 11. K.S.A. 75-4355a and 75-4355b and K.S.A. 2018 Supp., 75-5391, 75-5393 and 75-5397a are hereby repealed.

Sec. 12. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.