

## 2018 NAD Conference Policy Initiatives Track

Courtesy to Karen Atwood, President of WSAD, also delegate to NAD, for sharing this information with our WSDSC members.

I, Van Scheppach, have decided to paste one of the Initiatives for our readers of Washington State Deaf Senior Citizens to know how vital this bill is. It is being proposed at the NAD Conference, Hartford, CT this week July 2-8, 2018.

### **2018-CT-PUB-012**

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**Seconded by:** Washington, DC Association of the Deaf (DCAD)

**Priority Title:** Establish Nationwide Retirement Communities for Deaf Senior Citizens.

**Priority:** NAD shall design, develop and implement a strategy leading to the establishment of Deaf retirement communities providing accessible independent living, assistive living and nursing facilities for Deaf senior citizens.

**Rationale:** The feeling of safety is especially prized during one's golden years. And even more so within the underserved American Deaf senior community. " " According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 30 percent of adults 65-74 years old and 47 percent of adults 75 years old or older, have hearing loss. A significant percentage of those subsets are Deaf. " " The establishment of retirement communities exclusively for the American Deaf senior community will enable residents access to accessible and specialized retirement and medical facilities, staff who are fluent in American Sign Language and continued, full participation in the American Deaf community. " " However, the Federal government has asserted that senior citizen facilities built specifically for Deaf communities violate federal housing discrimination rules. " " Ideally, the Deaf senior citizen community will benefit from a Congressional authorization that establishes Federally-funded retirement communities for the Deaf and in the same manner and spirit as the Education of the Deaf Act (Public Law 99-371, as amended) which authorized the creation and continued funding of Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

Further, data from a survey of college students at Rochester Institute of Technology indicates that Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are 1.5 times more likely to be victims of relationship violence including sexual harassment, sexual assault, psychological abuse and physical abuse in their lifetime.

Deaf victims of domestic violence often face unique circumstances:

Information can travel quickly within a Deaf, DeafBlind or hard of hearing community, compromising confidentiality and the victim's safety. Law enforcement and shelters are often not skilled at communicating with Deaf,

DeafBlind or hard of hearing individuals and often don't have interpreters. Their abusive partners may take away their communication devices. Their abusive partners may give false information to the victim to make them believe they have fewer options. The victim may be isolated from family, friends, services, resources and options.

According to DeafHope these are some examples of what victims face and the tactics abusive partners use to abuse the Deaf: Intimidation through gestures, facial expressions, or exaggerated signs, floor stomping and pounding on the table or door Signing very close to a victim's face when angry Criticizing the victim's American sign language (ASL) skills or communication style Not informing the victim when people try to call on the phone or try to catch their attention Excluding the victim from important conversations Leaving the victim out in social situations with hearing people Talking negatively about the Deaf community Wrongly interpreting to manipulate the situation if the police are called Not allowing children to use ASL to talk with the victim Not allowing children to be proud of Deaf culture Criticizing the victim's speech and English skills

**Fiscal Impact:** The Public Policy Committee and the Law and Advocacy Center would execute in tandem with the NAD Senior Citizens section and the Deaf Seniors of America (DSA) organizational affiliate.

**Board / HQ Response:** While NAD has limited resources it would be difficult to design, develop, and implement strategy leading to program establishment addressing the needs of Deaf Senior Citizens. NAD supports creation of policies, models of best practices regarding the accessible environment for our Deaf Senior Citizens.