



# California Educators of the Deaf\*

Supporting quality education for Deaf\* students  
www.cal-ed.org

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March 15, 2021

Honorable Senator Cortese  
Senate Education Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2083  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **RE: CAL-ED and CAD Oppose SB 692**

Dear Honorable Cortese, & Members of the Senate Education Committee:

California Educators of the Deaf (Cal-ED) and the California Association of the Deaf (CAD) together oppose Senate Bill (SB) 692, known as Special Education Inclusion Act, as written. Cal-ED is one of the largest professional organizations in the west. The organization is composed of educators, parents, teacher trainers, interpreters, support staff, professionals, and other persons dedicated to the pursuit of educational excellence for Deaf children. Since 1906, CAD has preserved, protected, and promoted linguistic, human, and civil rights for all Deaf California. Because Deaf children, a linguistically vulnerable group of low-incidence students, are NOT exempted from the Special Education Inclusion Act, Cal-ED and CAD are working together to strongly oppose SB 692.

While total inclusive education is, in general, a worthy goal for hearing students with special needs, it will do more harm than good for Deaf students. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (2020), "interaction, to transmit knowledge and develop the (deaf) child's self-esteem and identity, is dependent upon direct communication. Yet, communication is the area most hampered between a Deaf child and his or her hearing peers and teachers. Even the availability of interpreter services in the educational setting may not address Deaf children's needs for direct and meaningful communication with peers and teachers." Deaf children must have an accessible environment for language learning and academic opportunities. SB 692 Special Education Inclusion Act is consequential to Deaf children as written.

Lastly, SB 692 works against California's Deaf Child's Bill of rights (AB 1836). Deaf Child's Bill of Rights documents CDE's role in education for Deaf children with full access to a complete language, signed and spoken, as appropriate, from birth until kindergarten and thereafter (K-12). This California law, AB 1835, stipulates that when the IEP team is developing goals and objectives for a Deaf child, it must consider several important issues to be considered by IFSP and IEP teams when recommending an educational "language-rich environment" placement

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for a Deaf child: 1) Deaf students have Deaf peers similar in age, language, and learning ability in ASL and English; 2) teachers and educational professionals are skilled in the Deaf child's language and way of communicating; 3) teachers and educational professionals are trained or certified to work with Deaf children with Deaf credentials; 4) the educational program's critical elements must be accessible to the Deaf child's way of communicating in ASL and English and in alignment with best practices for educating Deaf children.

This letter is to clarify the necessary exemption of all Deaf children from SB 692. SB 692 does not consider addressing language deprivation and barriers for Deaf children, which is consequential to Deaf children. Because Deaf children fall in the low incidence disability category, special education professionals lack a widespread understanding of total inclusion implications with Deaf children. This lack of knowledge and skills with Deaf education within the special education system contributes to the already substantial language barriers Deaf children experience in total inclusion. SB 692, as written, is counterintuitive to Deaf education.

Sincerely,



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