
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1916 (Lee) - Courts: court interpreters

Version: June 4, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: JUD. 10 - 1

Mandate: No

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: AB 1916 would apply the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act to American Sign Language interpreters.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown, potentially significant costs to the courts to reach bargaining agreements with spoken language interpreters and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters where working conditions, pay rates and work period restrictions are not readily comparable.

Bargaining may be impacted where regional Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) differs (Trial Court Trust Fund).

Background: The Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (Act) was created by SB 371 (Escutia), Chapter 1047, Statutes of 2002 to provide workplace protections for court interpreters who had largely been independent contractors. The legislation did not include ASL interpreters in the Act.

There are nine employed ASL interpreters and approximately 40 contract ASL interpreters. ASL interpreters have different working conditions than do spoken language interpreters. For example, ASL interpreters often use team interpreting to allow for breaks given the physical nature of the interpreting and the pay rates tend to differ.

The Judicial Council has four interpreter regions. The Los Angeles region has an MOU for its four employed ASL interpreters.