

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

May 1, 2020

Vice President Mike Pence  
White House Coronavirus Task Force  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

We write today as chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Deaf Caucus to implement the use of sign language interpreters during all public briefings, especially for the Administration's response to COVID-19. Individuals that are Deaf or hard of hearing need additional communication resources to ensure they receive the same information about this health and economic crisis as every other person in the United States.

During the current pandemic, sign language interpreters, as essential employees, serve the 48 million Deaf or hard of hearing people in the U.S. The current "stay at home" and "shelter at home" policies implemented across the country have disrupted the lives of all Americans. The use of sign language interpreters is crucial to ensuring that this unique population is provided with the same information as the rest of the country to help slow the spread, flatten the curve, and ultimately prevent loss of life.

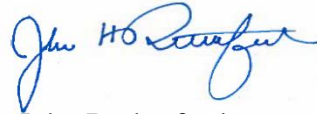
On July 26, 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law, which ensures that individuals with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Governors and local leaders are doing their part by ensuring access to information for all, regardless of disability. We encourage the Administration to mirror these efforts by making all public briefings fully accessible by adding sign language interpreters.

During a pandemic that has forced millions to stay home, effective communication for the Deaf and hard of hearing communities must be provided through sign language interpreters. We respectfully urge the Administration to immediately ensure that all public briefings are fully accessible and that all information pertaining to COVID-19 is disseminated equitably and expeditiously.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano  
Co-Chair  
Congressional Deaf Caucus



John Rutherford  
Co-Chair  
Congressional Deaf Caucus

Cc: Kayleigh McEnany, White House Press Secretary

Also signed by:

/s/

French Hill  
Member of Congress

/s/

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

/s/

Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

/s/

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress