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Signature of Sponsor

**AMEND Senate Bill No. 248\***

**House Bill No. 631**

by deleting all language after the enacting clause and substituting instead the following:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 10, Part 9, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a)

(1) The Tennessee School for the Deaf, together with the West Tennessee School for the Deaf, shall maintain a deaf mentor program to assist families and agencies in implementing bilingual and bicultural home-based programming for young children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.

(2) The program must be available at each of the following locations: the West Tennessee School for the Deaf in Jackson, the Tennessee School for the Deaf, Knoxville campus, and the Tennessee School for the Deaf, Nashville campus.

(3) The program must focus on:

(A) Preventing language deprivation;

(B) Providing a positive impact on a child's social and emotional development through a deaf role model; and

(C) Ensuring that children who are deaf have equal access to learning opportunities at home and in the community.

(4) The program must use a deaf mentor curriculum.

(5) The program must provide hearing parents of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind with the option of using a deaf mentor and parent

advisor to expose the parents' children to American Sign Language, English, deaf culture, and communication opportunities to provide the children with complete access to language acquisition, which, collectively, allows the children to grow and learn in a bilingual and bicultural milieu of hearing and deaf cultures instead of limiting the children's exposure to a signed or spoken English-only environment and the hearing culture of the children's families.

(b) Deaf mentors shall:

(1) Make regular visits to the homes of young children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind;

(2) Interact with the children using American Sign Language and other communication methods to provide complete access to language acquisition;

(3) Demonstrate to family members how to use American Sign Language and other communication methods to provide complete access to language acquisition; and

(4) Help families understand and appreciate deafness and deaf culture.

(c) Parent advisors shall:

(1) Make regular visits to the homes of young children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind;

(2) Interact with the children using listening and spoken English;

(3) Support visual communication opportunities to provide complete access to language acquisition;

(4) Demonstrate to family members how to use a bilingual and bicultural communication approach and other communication methods to provide complete access to language acquisition; and

(5) Help families understand and appreciate deafness and deaf culture.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.