

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 816

92ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES WALKER (Sponsor), MEINERS, MOORE, WHORTON,
WALSH, SAGER, SANDER, SCHOEMEHL, HARRIS (110),
GRAHAM AND WILDBERGER (Co-sponsors).

Pre-filed December 4, 2003, and copies ordered printed.

STEPHEN S. DAVIS, Chief Clerk

2684L.011

AN ACT

To amend chapter 1, RSMo, relating to laws and statutes by adding thereto one new section relating to the recognition of languages used by the deaf community.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 1, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 1.029, to read as follows:

1.029. 1. American Sign Language, as defined in section 209.285, RSMo, shall be recognized as an autonomous, unique visual-gestural language with its own syntax, rhetoric, grammar and morphology.

2. The teaching, study and learning of American Sign Language is encouraged in all schools in the state of Missouri. Any state educational institution may offer one or more elective courses in American Sign Language. American Sign Language shall be treated the same as any other foreign language.

3. Students enrolled in any state educational institutions that offer courses in American Sign Language may receive academic credit for such courses by either taking such courses or by demonstrating proficiency in American Sign Language if the school gives credit for demonstrating proficiency in any other foreign language. Academic credit received for either taking courses in American Sign Language or demonstrating proficiency in American Sign Language shall be counted towards satisfaction of any foreign language requirements of the institution teaching such courses. Academic credit received for either successful completion of courses in American Sign Language in a secondary school or demonstrated proficiency in American Sign Language shall be counted towards satisfaction of the foreign language entrance requirements of any institution of

18 **higher education located in the state of Missouri.**

19 **4. Only qualified persons who know and use the language shall be employed to**
20 **teach American Sign Language in Missouri schools.**

21 **5. The Missouri commission for the deaf and hard of hearing shall provide**
22 **assistance, advice, and guidance on the development, establishment and teaching of courses**
23 **in American Sign Language in Missouri schools when needed and requested.**