

Proclamation



Nebraska Judicial Branch

WHEREAS, Today in Nebraska we celebrate the dedication of the Language Access Program and the skills, abilities, and services, that our court and probation interpreters have provided over the last 50 years to our Judicial Branch; and

WHEREAS, Over seven percent of Nebraskans are born outside of the United States, with nearly 12 percent of Nebraskans over the age of five speaking a language other than English at home; and

WHEREAS, In Nebraska alone, there are more than 100 languages spoken in family homes; and

WHEREAS, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Limited English Proficient individuals may receive inequitable access to the legal system as a result of language barriers; and

WHEREAS, Legislative Bill 116 passed by Governor J.J. Exon on March 2, 1973, declared it to be the policy of this state that the constitutional rights of persons unable to communicate in the English language cannot be fully protected unless interpreters are available, and it was the intent of this act to provide a procedure for the appointment of interpreters to avoid injustice and to assist such persons in their own defense; and

WHEREAS, The Language Access Program is comprised of individuals with a resolute commitment for providing high-quality language services in multiple forms, including Communication Access Real Time Translation, document translation, in-person, phone and video interpretation; and

WHEREAS, This facilitates equal access to the law by emphasizing the delivery of equitable and prompt language services; and

WHEREAS, Court and probation interpreters are trained and highly skilled in consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, and sight translation to best facilitate communication; and

WHEREAS, Court and probation interpreters are committed to lifelong personal and professional development in order to best serve the Judicial Branch.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael G. Heavican, Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM August 14, 2023, as

Recognition Day for the 50th Anniversary of Language Access in Nebraska Courts.

On behalf of the Nebraska Judicial Branch, I urge all citizens – particularly those within the legal community – to recognize the significant contributions of the Language Access Program in ensuring that all Nebraskans can tell their stories in their own words regardless of the language they speak.

