AB 5 Misclassifies Language Professionals and Must Be Fixed

ALL sectors of language professions stand with CoPTIC so ALL Californians can overcome language barriers

Coalition of Practicing Translators & Interpreters of California

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Every day throughout California, interpreters and translators assist ordinary people in bridging language barriers to make our lives, communities, and economy work.

But a sweeping new law in 2020 aimed at ending exploitation of workers, AB 5, contains a critical mistake in its terms. This error in the code is having a devastating impact on highly skilled language professionals, many whom are women and immigrants, who devoted years of training to develop their expertise serving others and contributing nearly $2 billion to the state's economy.

The law failed to respect the long-standing independence of translators and interpreters and failed to include them in the list of occupations exempted from a rigid definition of "employee." The vast majority of language professionals work as independent contractors. Far from injured by this classification, it has allowed language professionals to flourish in California, with a range of vital benefits for Californians who draw on their expert service at operating tables, negotiating tables, and kitchen tables. Now, hundreds are at grave risk of losing their livelihoods, which also endangers services to millions of ordinary people, including children, detainees and asylum seekers, seniors, speakers with limited English proficiency, and the deaf and hard of hearing.

We cannot afford to leave ANY Californian behind on fixing the error with the law. The Coalition of Practicing Translators and Interpreters of California (CoPTIC) has crafted terms to fix the mistake in AB 5 and has the full support of the entire language profession. Only legislation that meets this standard of inclusivity and integrity will protect the irreplaceable language bridge that freelance interpreters and translators provide Californians every day all over our diverse state.

The entirety of the language professions support the solution proposed by CoPTIC:

"The proposed amendment should simply follow the same wording as that for other professions already exempted in AB 5, by listing professional translators and interpreters, just as CoPTIC recommends." –Ted Wozniak, President, American Translators Association (**ATA**)

"The Joint National Committee on Languages (JNCL) supports ATA's position and the efforts of CoPTIC to achieve success in California." –William P. Rivers, Executive Director, **JNCL**

"Lawmakers need to fix AB 5 to protect all practicing language professionals from the unintended consequences of this law." –Katharine Allen and Barry S. Olsen, Californians, **InterpretAmerica**

"The freedom of all interpreters and translators to continue as independent contractors as they do in all other states and countries must not be infringed, period." –David Violet, President, International Association of Conference Interpreters – USA (**AIIC**)

"*NCTA stands behind CoPTIC, the representative body for the language services. We urge adoption of the language proposed by CoPTIC to fully eliminate the uncertainty that is currently leading buyers of language services to exclude California-based independent translators and interpreters."* –Michael Schubert, President, Northern California Translators Association (**NCTA**)

"We stress the vital importance of an exemption for all freelance translators and interpreters who have no complaints about their status as independent contractors and are not exploited or wronged in any way by clients. Being independent contractors has been beneficial for them and their customers for many decades." –Ms. Pascale Ledeur-Kraus, President, The American Association of Language Specialists (**TAALS**)

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