

June 22, 2009

The Honorable Pat Quinn
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

On behalf of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the deaf and hard of hearing community in the United States, I write to express our opposition to proposed cuts to and closing of the Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD). It is the only school for the deaf in the state of Illinois, providing comprehensive services to nearly 300 deaf and hard of hearing children from birth through age 21 and their family members.

Education of deaf and hard of hearing children starts with quality access to language, communication, and peers and adults, as well as a feeling of genuine membership in the school community. For these children, this means interaction in an accessible academic environment where American Sign Language is used. With a solid language base, they can develop their cognitive, academic, and psychosocial abilities and grow into successful, productive and contributing adults. Because of the unique ability of ISD to provide a visual environment it is an ideal place for deaf and hard of hearing learners to flourish.

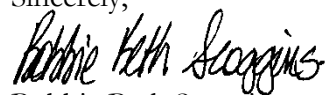
ISD exists also because local schools and school districts are unable to fully meet the specialized needs of deaf and hard of hearing children. If ISD were to close these children would be sent back to these very environments that cannot fully meet their needs.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that Illinois will receive an additional \$3,171,731,435 in American Recovery and Reinvestment funding for elementary and secondary education (see www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/10stbystate.pdf). I urge you to find a budget resolution that protects deaf and hard of hearing children attending ISD, as well as other constituencies whose services and well-being are threatened by these proposals.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) was established in 1880 by deaf leaders who believed in the right of the American deaf community to use sign language, to congregate on issues important to them, and to have its interests represented at the national level. These beliefs remain true to this day, with American Sign Language as a core value. As a nonprofit federation, the mission of the NAD is to preserve, protect, and promote the civil, human, and linguistic rights of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America. The advocacy scope of the NAD is broad, covering the breadth of a lifetime and impacting future generations in the areas of early intervention, education, employment, health care, technology, telecommunications, youth leadership, and more. For more information, visit www.nad.org.

We also support the opposition of the Illinois Association of the Deaf (IAD) to the proposed cuts to and closure of ISD. Thank you for considering our views, and we stand ready to be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Bobbie Beth Scoggins
President