

State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

DEAF AWARENESS MONTH

2023

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, North Carolina is projected to experience a 33 percent increase in adults with hearing loss, from 1.2 million people in 2015 to 1.65 million by 2030; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina birthing and neonatal facilities offer newborn hearing screening services prior to discharge; more than 99 percent of infants are screened for the presence of permanent hearing loss resulting in more than 200 infants being diagnosed each year, with about the same number acquiring hearing loss by the time they enter school; and

WHEREAS, the Deaf population of North Carolina includes individuals born profoundly deaf, who use American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary means of communication, and those who use hearing aids, assistive listening devices, or other forms of amplifications and communication modes; and

WHEREAS, people who identify as Deaf belong to a cultural and linguistic community, with shared language, social norms, rules of behavior, and history; and

WHEREAS, ASL is a rich and sophisticated language, with its own syntax, morphology, structure, and a deep capacity to convey complex thoughts, ideas, and emotions; early exposure to ASL provides a strong linguistic foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, fostering meaningful attachments with their parents, and increasing their readiness for kindergarten, capacity to regulate their own behaviors and emotions, and their future success as self-sufficient adults; and

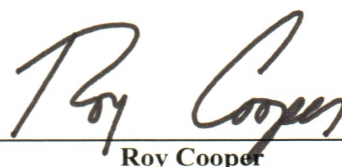
WHEREAS, North Carolina recognizes September as Deaf Awareness Month to commemorate the first Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf, held in September of 1951, and the United Nations' proclamation of September 2023 as the International Day of Sign Languages; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, through the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and their Regional Centers, provides services, including advocacy for communication access, consultation, Deaf culture and ASL awareness, information and referrals to people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind, and their communities in this state; and

WHEREAS, DSDHH joins organizations including the North Carolina Association of the Deaf, North Carolina Black Deaf Advocates, Deaf Seniors of North Carolina, North Carolina Deaf-Blind Associates, North Carolina American Sign Language Teachers Association, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: Office of Exceptional Children, North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: Deafness and Communicative Disorders and North Carolina Early Hearing Detection and Intervention in encouraging increased awareness, understanding, and recognition of the many contributions made by Deaf people across our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September, 2023, as **"DEAF AWARENESS MONTH"** in North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.





Roy Cooper
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this thirty-first day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-three and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-eighth.