SOUND ALLIANCE
*Organizing for the Common Good.*

January 25, 2010

Member Institutions:

- Admiral Congregational United Church of Christ
- Bethel Education Association
- CASA Latina
- Holy Disciples Catholic Church
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 46
- IBEW Local 76
- Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28: Teamsters Local 117
- Kent Education Association
- Kol HaNeshamah
- Laborers Local 252
- Miles Memorial CME
- Normandy Park Congregational Church
- Painters & Allied Trades District Council 5
- Plumbers & Pipefitters, UA Local 32
- Seattle Community Colleges Federation of Teachers, AFT 1789
- Seattle Education Association
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 66
- Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001
- St. Michael Catholic Church – Olympia
- St. Jude Catholic Church
- St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church
- Summit UniServ Council: Fife, Franklin Pierce & Puyallup Education Associations
- Tacoma Dominican Sisters
- Tacoma Education Association
- Temple Beth Am
- University Unitarian Church
- Washington Educators in Early Learning AFT / WEA

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Dear Representative,

Sound Alliance is a multi-county organization of diverse religious institutions, education organizations unions and other civic non-profits in the Puget Sound region. Since our founding in June 2008, hundreds of members of our institutions have taken action on a range of issues of concern, from education to jobs, immigration to health care.

We would like to take this opportunity to speak directly about the total cuts to the DSCH budget for medical interpretation services for limited English speakers.

Our organizational position is for no cuts for these services, for the following reasons:

1. As a recipient of Medicaid dollars the State of Washington has a legal responsibility under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to provide a meaningful opportunity to limited English speakers to participate in public programs. Lack of interpretive services nullifies that opportunity, and puts an entire population - men, women, and children - at risk.

2. Interpretation services were funded in response to 15 civil rights complaints against DSHS. If the funding is eliminated the State will surely be vulnerable to litigation.

3. The overall cost of healthcare in WA State will increase as non-English speakers are forced to use emergency rooms for serious problems rather than clinics for primary care. Taxpayers will bear the burden.

3. The cuts will save $4.5M, but lose $12.2M in a federal match.

We believe that eliminating this program will result in higher short and long term costs, and efficiencies in administration and service delivery are more sensible ways of mitigating shortfalls in the state budget.

We look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss this crucial issue.

Sincerely,