



American Translators Association

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

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Statement of Position Regarding California Assembly Bill 5 and Request for Exemption

The American Translators Association (ATA) is a professional association of nearly 10,000 members who provide high-end professional translation and interpreting services across an array of fields, in a multitude of business arrangements.

ATA believes that the current version of California Assembly Bill 5 (AB5) will improperly classify the majority of our members as employees, when in fact they are independent contractors, by choice, and work on a freelance basis with multiple clients, by design. Without an exemption, this bill would unduly lump together these independent professionals with individual workers who have not made a deliberate choice to provide freelance services.

ATA recognizes that some translators and interpreters have not chosen to be independent contractors. Those individuals are often required to work as if they were freelancers by a single employer that controls their work, schedule, pay, and other job-related factors. People in those specific situations should have the right to be considered employees.

This situation, however, does not apply to the majority of ATA's independent-contractor members, who have chosen to provide professional freelance services. The majority of our members decide when to work, the clients for whom they wish to work, the ways in which they want to operate, and how much to charge. The current version of AB5 threatens their very livelihood, since each California-based language service provider would be required to treat these professionals as employees, even though they render services to multiple clients as independent contractors.

Few language service providers in our industry have sufficient work to hire individual translators and interpreters as employees for every language on the market, so that language access can be provided to those who require it. With the current wording of AB5, those companies would have to work with translators and interpreters based outside of California, thereby hurting the very people that this bill has proposed to help, as well as potentially limiting language access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals living in California.

As such, ATA supports the right of our California-based colleagues to establish their own individual business arrangements, and respectfully requests that an exemption be made for our professional translators and interpreters.