

Submission from Louise Redwood

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to register my support for the BSL (Scotland) Bill.

Promoting British sign Language is crucial and not just for the Deaf community but for everyone in Scotland. The BSL used in Scotland varies to that used in England and Wales as is the case with all natural languages. This is part of our heritage just as much as the Gaelic language. If BSL isn't promoted it will decline to the detriment of us all, not just the Deaf Community.

As a recognised British language it is not unreasonable that it is promoted alongside other British languages such as Gaelic and Welsh.

Any monetary costs incurred promoting BSL will be offset with the knock on effect of people being able to take part in the wider society, paying more tax etc.

If BSL was available as a language taught in Scottish schools I truly believe that many children would choose it as an option. I know that this is the case with my own children and their friends. In my experience as a hearing BSL learner, many hearing people are interested in BSL but have no way of learning it other than at a considerable cost in specialist centres such as Deaf Action here in Edinburgh, so the choice to learn it at school would be very welcome.

Also the more people had the option to learn at school the more people would go on to train as BSL interpreters.

I could go on forever about the benefits of the BSL (Scotland) Bill but basically the question I put to you is why wouldn't you want Deaf BSL users who are British citizens, living in their own country, communicating using a recognised British language, why wouldn't you want them to have language equality?

Yours faithfully

Louise Redwood