February 9, 2016 – Introduced by Senators L. TAYLOR, OLSEN, GEDURE, C. LARSON, VINEHOUT and HARRIS DODD, cosponsored by Representatives BERCEAU, BROSTOFF, JORGENSEN, MILROY, SINICKI, SPREITZER and ZEPNICK. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

Relating to: proclaiming March 2016 as Deaf History Month in Wisconsin.

Whereas, an estimated 4 million people between the ages of 18 and 64, or 2.1% of U.S. citizens, of whom 70,000 are Wisconsinites, suffer from a hearing disability; and

Whereas, these individuals face enormous additional challenges in their day-to-day lives, from scarce education and employment opportunities to ongoing discrimination; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf has identified the need to improve emergency preparedness for deaf people and ways to address this need, including educating first responders and developing emergency signaling devices such as fire alarms; and

Whereas, the deaf face a lack of accessible mental health or substance abuse services in the state of Wisconsin, such as few to no ASL-fluent counselors/therapists and low funding for interpreting services for support groups; and
Whereas, the National Association of the Deaf recognizes March 13 to April 15 as Deaf History Month, to memorialize the March 13, 1988, Deaf President Now protest at Gallaudet University, the April 8, 1864, signing of the Gallaudet University charter by President Abraham Lincoln, and the April 15, 1817, establishment of the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, CT; and

Whereas, while great legislative steps have been taken to help the deaf community, from the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to the Wisconsin legislature recognizing ASL as a foreign language in 1991, more can be done; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin legislature finds a compelling public interest in promoting awareness of the deaf community and its issues, in supporting advocacy for this silent minority, and in celebrating its unique and proud history in the state of Wisconsin; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the legislature hereby proclaims March 2016 as Deaf History Month in Wisconsin.

(END)