



To CASLI Members:

As the Board of CASLI, we have come together to share our thoughts and emotions about what has been happening for too long in both our country and in our profession, and we are sharing these discussions in this letter to our communities. Perhaps for some, these sentiments will be hard to read. Perhaps for some, they will feel liberating. Perhaps some will disagree with what is shared. We ask you to come with an open heart and mind.

As the Board of CASLI, we apologize to our communities for the harm that has been caused by CASLI in the name of professionalism. We acknowledge the ongoing harm that exists for members and non-members alike. We acknowledge the historical lack of IBPOC members on the Association Board and the hurt caused by the PCRPP process to members from those same communities. We recognize the need to work with Deaf interpreters, raising the profile of the work they do in our communities.

Our Association has not always acted effectively nor always acted in an effective manner. The lack of clarity in CASLI policy and procedure and processes, the reliance on volunteers who lack in governance training and who are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the work, and the wide geographical and societal spread of our national association have contributed to where we are now: in need of change.

CASLI members have worked diligently over the years to support its members but has unwittingly recreated systems of oppression against IBPOC and Deaf communities. Using an analogy to describe where we are and how we arrived would be easy, however, analogies are often used as a way of softening the truth and making the truth easier to ignore or gloss over. The CASLI Board is asking members to face the hard truth by naming it for what it is.

South of the border, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf is being asked to face their system with all of its -isms and it is a challenging time for many. Racism and Audism have been pointed out, as have Ableism and other isms. It might be easy to sit back and watch what is happening in our neighbour's space without realizing that CASLI, too, needs to face those same isms. Racism and audism have actively divided our profession and are impacting the community we serve. We apologize to our colleagues and the community for the harm caused by CASLI processes. We are now taking a stand to end the ongoing system of oppression. It is time to actively seek change.

We are all CASLI and we all have the responsibility to create sustainable change. We can start by reframing what it means to be an interpreter and what the profession of sign language interpreting not only looks like, but IS, recognizing the work of Deaf interpreters and their contributions to the field, acknowledge the barriers faced by IBPOC members in the realm of education and employment while working to remove those barriers, and continue to check in with our own privileges. We can collectively



work to ensure that our policies do not become weapons of prejudice while simultaneously acknowledging the harm current practices have caused, and will continue to cause if left unchanged.

The CASLI Board knows that all those who have contributed to the formation and growth of CASLI from an idea to an Association, have done so with positive intentions. We look to the volunteers of the past who have done the best they knew how to do and we thank them. We look to the staff and volunteers who continue to give their best with gratitude. We look at our structure with a careful eye. And we look to each and every member and ask them to stand up for change, for equity within, for equity without. The needs of the past and growth CASLI underwent focussed our collective attention on a variety of programs and systems while leaving the basic structure stagnant and convoluted. The unsustainability of our structure as it now stands will cause a complete collapse if it is allowed to continue on in its current manner. Even if there were enough hours in a day to fix every problem as it presents itself, more issues will appear because the foundation is no longer what it needs to be.

Change is a collective process. In order to know how to best reframe our Association, the CASLI Board is asking you to join us in reflective discussion.

To start, CASLI will host five meetings for members and two meetings for the Deaf community online starting on July 05 2021. The member meetings will look at one immediate step the membership can take to make a change in a positive direction - taking the PCRPP section out of the bylaws and into a policy document - all meetings will ask participants to share their vision of what a healthy sustainable equitable CASLI could be. The community meetings will be open to whomever can join at the meeting time. For our members, we are asking that you sign up in the member section of [www.casli.ca](http://www.casli.ca). Members who are not able to attend the online sessions are encouraged to reach out to the Board to share their thoughts. The goal is to have a process that is inclusive and representative.

In preparation for these meetings, the CASLI board asks each member of our Association to do some heart work: reflect, unpack privilege, check yourself for any isms, both evident and hidden, and come with an open heart and mind, ready to listen, ready to create a stronger CASLI, a CASLI where all members find equity and openness, a CASLI that serves not only our members, but also the community for which it was originally formed: the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind community.

CASLI Board