

Dear Representative Greenlick,

As a resident of the state of Oregon, I am writing in support of HB 4104: Support Access to Sound for Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Our current hearing aid mandate is limited, making it difficult for some families of children with hearing loss to receive the necessary technology and services they need. This bill would update the mandate to include necessary components that current private insurance companies are not required to offer.

As a speech and language pathologist who works exclusively with children with hearing loss to help them develop their listening and spoken language skills, I cannot reiterate enough the importance of early diagnosis, early access to sound and quality intervention. When these components are in place, children with hearing loss are able to overcome the challenges of having a hearing loss. They may attend their neighborhood school alongside their hearing peers, require fewer special education services, and become productive members of our communities. Denials, long waits for evaluations, and high out-of-pocket expenses for necessary equipment should not prevent our children with hearing loss from achieving their full potential. Families and employers who pay for private insurance should be able to depend on their insurance to cover the services and technology necessary to help children learn language. Our families know time is precious and long waits, denials, high costs of equipment create unnecessary stress for our families who want the best for their children.

Let's get this bill passed so that when a child with hearing loss is born in the state of Oregon, our families can rest assured knowing their child is covered for whatever they might need.

Thank you for your time today and for considering this bill. Your support of children with hearing loss is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Claire Leake, M.S. CCC-SLP

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