

To Whom It May Concern,

In May of 2010 my husband and I welcomed a beautiful baby girl into our family. Before we ever left the hospital, we had an indication of what may lay ahead of us as our daughter, Ellery Faith, failed her newborn hearing screening. Although we will forever be grateful for newborn hearing screenings the events that unfolded in regards to insurance, appointments and trying to simply have our child's basic needs met were nothing short of awful.

Even though we were armed early on with the knowledge that our child needed hearing aids we encountered an epic battle with our insurance –despite being well insured, public school teachers—to actually get her seen by an audiologist.

As I'm certain you are aware, 2010 was a milestone year for children's hearing aid benefits, but we fell into a loophole where our insurance wasn't mandated to provide coverage until months later when our policy renewed.

I could easily go into much greater detail about the obstacles, roadblocks and incompetence we encountered simply trying to give our child access to SOUND. We weren't seeking something radical, experimental or extreme—SOUND, hearing technology.

No child, no person should have to be faced with a world without sound when such basic technology exists.

Now, here we are, parents of a thriving 7-year-old. She's thriving because WE fought. WE paid for appointments, molds, audiologists, personal FM systems and everything in between. WE weren't willing to have her future be compromised because of a broken system. Sadly, not all families are in a position where they are capable of the fight, the financial burden alone, nor are they armed with the knowledge and tenacity to wade through a broken system that fails to prioritize what is best for children over what is least costly.

Do you know how much less it costs to get a child early access to hearing technology, resources and intervention as compared to the cost of special education resources being allocated for years to come? Children who do not receive treatment for hearing loss cost the education system an additional \$420K and are faced with overall lifetime costs of \$1 million in special education, lost wages and health.

My child, through our fight, was given access to sound at 3 months, thanks to her early amplification and intervention she has developed like a typical hearing child. She wears hearing aids every day and uses her FM daily at school. There is no doubt she will grow into an adult that will have an immense impact on the world around her and it's unfathomable to think if left to the system she could've been faced with steady struggles and some insurmountable hurdles.

I appreciate you taking the time to read our story and I implore you to VOTE YES on HB 4104, there is no other alternative.

Sincerely,

April Bailie