

Submitter: Tiffany Tram
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506
HB 2994A

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subject: Support & Fund HB 2994A

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means,

I support the funding of HB 2994A bill because the results will pay itself forward for many generations and benefit our communities across the entire state. Continuing support of the deaf and hard of hearing will help make more productive families and individuals that will contribute back into our state in many ways, including higher incomes and higher tax contributions. Productive young adults begin as children who received adequate resources to develop productive skill sets. Families with support have more disposable income to invest back into our economy. This is another way to tap into a untapped market segment to reach greater human capitalization for our state. We must invest in our families now and it will pay it forward for many generations in Oregon.

I am writing today to share my strong support of HB 2994A, a bill that will ensure deaf and hard-of-hearing kids across the state get the critical healthcare services they need to thrive.

In 2018, the legislature passed HB 4104 which required insurers to cover hearing aids, cochlear implants, and certain assistive listening devices for children to reduce barriers in school and life for those with hearing loss.

Without consistent, clear access to sound, children often fall behind in spoken language acquisition, literacy, academics, and important social skills. Early interventions and access to hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices are incredibly important for a child's development. HB 4104 passed almost unanimously through the legislature, showing strong bipartisan support for such a policy to ensure the well-being of our youngest residents. It set a national model of care for how the state, in partnership with insurers, can support Oregonians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Since the passage of HB 4104, several issues have cropped up in the implementation process, barring children with hearing loss from being able to access these critical services, and forcing families to pay out-of-pocket costs for less

medically appropriate alternatives.

HB 2994A will clarify and expand insurance coverage of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices for deaf and hard-of-hearing children across the state and ensure the promise the state made to our children in 2018 is properly implemented.

This bill passed the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee with unanimous support and has a bipartisan group of co-chief and regular sponsors. The state has an opportunity to invest in the future of our children. That is why I am urging you to fund HB 2994A this session and keep the promise the legislature made to our deaf and hard-of-hearing children five years ago.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Tram
Beaverton, OR
97003