



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Bob D. Hackett, Chair  
Senate Insurance Committee  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**RE: Support for HB 152 (Madeline's Law)**

Dear Chairman Hackett and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support for House Bill 152 (Madeline's Law), which provides hearing aid and related service coverage to those 21 years of age and younger.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 234,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 8,000 ASHA members reside in Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

House Bill 152 provides critical support for reducing instances of untreated hearing loss. Studies have linked untreated hearing loss to many social and economic factors, including depression, withdrawal from social situations, reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety, impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks, reduced job performance and earning potential, and diminished psychological and overall health.<sup>2</sup>

Approximately 15% of school-age children have some degree of hearing loss in one or both ears, with 5.4% (or about 1 in 20) having less severe or unilateral hearing loss.<sup>3</sup> Academic achievement and social functioning are significantly impacted by even a mild to moderate hearing loss, which may bring about difficulty in learning and building important interpersonal skills necessary for healthy self-esteem. In fact, over one-third of children with a lesser degree of or unilateral hearing loss are projected to fail at least one grade or will require additional educational support, which is estimated to cost the educational system over \$5.5 billion.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you for helping to ensure that the youth of Ohio have access to hearing aids, which will help them to fully participate in their learning environments and daily activities. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Tim Boyd, ASHA's director of state health care and education affairs, at [tboyd@asha.org](mailto:tboyd@asha.org).

Sincerely,

Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP  
2024 ASHA President

Cc: Rep. Casey Weinstein

---

<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Ohio* [Quick Facts].

<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/ohio-state-flyer.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Jayakody, D. M. P., Wishart, J., Stegeman, I., Eikelboom, R., Moyle, T. C., Yiannos, J. M., Goodman-Simpson, J. J., and Almeida, O. P. (2022). *Is There an Association Between Untreated Hearing Loss and Psychosocial Outcomes?* *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, 14, 868673. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnagi.2022.868673>

<sup>3</sup> Niskar, A.S., Kieszak, S.M., Holmes, A., Esteban, E., Rubin, C., and Brody, D. J. (1998). *Prevalence of hearing loss among children 6 to 19 years of age: the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey*. *JAMA*, 279(14), 1071–1075. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.279.14.1071>

<sup>4</sup> Tharpe, A.M. *Unilateral and Mild Bilateral Hearing Loss in Children: Past and Current Perspectives*. *Trends in Amplification*. 2008;12(1):7-15. doi:10.1177/1084713807304668