

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ALLIANCE

August 4, 2016

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for S. 2424, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act

Dear Senators Portman and Gillibrand:

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance (DHHA) stands in **strong support of S. 2424, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Act**, and thanks you for your leadership on this important reauthorization.

The DHHA is a coalition of consumer and professional organizations that advocate for federal public policies and programs that will improve the quality of life for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, all people with hearing loss, and their support networks. As such, our member organizations support and understand the critical significance of EHDI Programs.

S. 2424 would reauthorize critical EHDI grants, which currently fund state-wide programs that screen newborns for hearing loss before they leave the hospital. Additionally, the legislation would foster early intervention and family support programs that aim to ensure that parents of young children with hearing loss can gain access to early intervention services they need, such as hearing aids and other hearing assistive technologies, language development, and auditory training.

Research has shown that the **early intervention of hearing loss is critical for children** to learn language and develop literacy, providing a pathway for success in their educational and life endeavors. Early detection of hearing loss can dramatically better one's chance to experience a greater number of life opportunities - professionally, academically, and socially. **Furthermore, early detection and intervention of hearing loss has proven to be one of the most cost-effective interventions in health care.**

Although great strides have been made, significant work remains to be done to ensure that infants and children with hearing loss receive timely and appropriate services. **Continued federal funding is necessary to ensure that state EHDI programs remain fully operational and successful so they properly link screening programs with diagnosis**

Alexander Graham Bell
Association for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing

American Academy of Audiology

American Academy of
Otolaryngology-Head and Neck
Surgery

American Cochlear Implant
Alliance

American Society for Deaf
Children

American Speech-Language-
Hearing Association

Council of American Instructors
of the Deaf

Directors of Speech and Hearing
Programs in State Health and
Welfare Agencies

Hands & Voices

Hearing Health Foundation

Hearing Loss Association of
America

International Hearing Society

National Court Reporters
Association

National Cued Speech
Association

Consumer Co-Chair:
Susan Boswell
Alexander Graham Bell
Association for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing
sboswell@agbell.org

Professional Co-Chair:
Alissa Parady
International Hearing Society
aparady@ihinfo.org

and early intervention. DHHA encourages all other Senators to co-sponsor the reauthorization of this critical program.

Sincerely,



Susan Boswell
Co-Chair



Alissa Parady
Co-Chair