

**To:** House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee  
**From:** Rob Henderson & Teagan Henderson  
**Subject:** Please Support HB 2994

**Wednesday, Feb. 15th, 2023**

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwin, and Members of the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee,

My name is Rob Henderson, and I am writing on behalf of myself and my son, Teagan. We are constituents of Rep. Lily Morgan and want to share our strong support of HB 2994.

As parents of a hard of hearing child, we strive to give him the best chance at life. For Teagan, this meant getting him fitted with bi-lateral, which means both ears with hearing aids at the age of 7 months. Without this technology our son would not have access to spoken language to fully engage with the world. Thanks to his incredible audiologist, the technology from Phonak, and the access to teachers versed in teaching listening and spoken language to the deaf and hard of hearing, our son is thriving.

When it comes to his technology it takes a great deal of maintenance and effort to make sure he is hearing sounds exactly as he should. The ear is a complicated organ, as is the speech we use every single day. I didn't know prior to having a child that is hard of hearing that the human voice actually makes 100 different tones to be able to understand language. Without aids our son can hear 5 of those 100 sounds. With his hearing aids he gains access to 95 of those sounds! So it is vitally important that we are consistent with his equipment.

We believed that this access was going to be readily available to all of the deaf and hard of hearing children in Oregon once a measure was passed requiring insurance companies to cover their equipment and access. However once again the insurance companies have found loopholes to deny coverage. Our son needs to see his audiologist when he needs to see her to adjust his aids and sound. Our son needs properly fitting ear molds more than once a year to make sure he can hear and that his aids are working properly. He needs specific models of hearing aids to give him the best access to sound possible, and an insurance company should not be deciding that for him. This should be between Teagan and his audiologist on what services best serve him and his needs.

Thank you to the committee for your time reviewing my testimony, I once again urge your support of HB 2994 this session.

And below you will find my son, Teagan's written testimony:

**Teagan' Testimony:**

Hi, my name is Teagan, I am 9 years old and have had hearing aids my whole life.

What hearing aids do for me is they let me hear and talk to my friends and family like everyone else.

I like hearing sound in a certain way and Shelby helps me do that and I need to see her multiple times a year to make adjustments and make the sound right.

I need to see Shelby when my ears grow so I can get new ear molds as needed. If my ear molds don't fit right I can't hear because the sound is fuzzy and there is lots of feedback that stops me from hearing.

I need certain hearing aids that are right for my hearing levels and help me hear.

All of these things are important to let me speak and hear my family and friends. Insurance companies need to cover all of the pieces so I can be a part of school and life.

Thank you.