

**Lori Earls**

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**Rodney Wakeman**

Anderson House Office Building  
124 N. Capitol Ave.  
Lansing 48933  
Room 521

Dear Rodney Wakeman,

Language Equality & Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) is a critical movement where we assert that language deprivation or delay from birth to age 5 is the main cause of Deaf children's eventual academic and social struggles. Why is it critical! Because of misguided and misinformed principles, policy and ideology, Deaf children frequently arrive at Kindergarten without adequate language skills to undertake academic challenges.

Our Deaf children who are visually oriented, do not get full access to the language. American Sign Language (ASL) is the visual language with a rule-governed system used to convey messages. Unfortunately most school programs are more focused on hearing and speech therapy. As a result, this delays Kindergarten readiness. Most medical approaches seek a cure. It causes a critical period of acquiring a language.

"ASL is a human right that belongs to all Deaf children ensuring them to acquire both a natural and visual language and a bridge to acquiring the national language English. ASL is a human right, not merely an option." (Rosen 2008)

"The single great risk faced by Deaf children is inadequate exposure to being usable to their first language" (Dr. Sanjay Gulati, Professor Harvard Medical School).

Please join us, LEAD-K, to support efforts to ensure that Deaf children have a strong language foundation for success in life. End the misguided and misinformed principles, policy and ideology in Deaf Education. Reform the Early Hearing Detection Intervention (EHDI) to Early Healthy Deaf Identity with Deaf gains and resources. Recognize ASL is the language for all Deaf people.

Sincerely,

**Lori Earls**