



Hearing Loss Association of America  
Michigan State Association  
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A non-profit 501(c)3 tax exempt organization

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**RE: Opposition to HB 5777**

I am writing on behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America – Michigan State Association (HLAA- MI). We are asking you to **OPPOSE** HB 5777. The bill is heavily weighted in favor of American Sign Language (ASL). There are two primary reasons for our opposition:

1. Subsection 6 requires that services for children that utilize ASL are provided by “professionals with the background, training, and experience in and who use American Sign Language.” This completely leaves out children using Listening and Spoken Language (LSL), Cued Speech, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and any other appropriate modes of communication.
2. HB 5777 calls for the establishment of a biased advisory committee. The advisory committee calls for the appointment of 15 volunteer members and gives an outright majority to ASL advocates. It is highly probable that ASL advocates may get a supermajority due to loosely defined language in the bill. The loosely defined language requires members on the committee who either solely use or specialize in spoken English to also have or know another “mode of communication”. Mode of communication can also imply ASL. This creates bias in favor of ASL when it comes to educating and informing parents of newly deaf or hard of hearing children about language, communication modes, amplification devices, cochlear implants, and services and programs for deaf and hard of hearing children aged 0 to 5 years.

There is no need for an advisory committee as the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services already provide programs, assessments, and resources to parents of newly deaf and hard of hearing children. Parents of newly deaf or hard of hearing children need to be aware of and understand all their options. They must be educated about options neutrally without the possibility of weight being thrown towards one specific method of communication.

Again, we ask you to **OPPOSE** HB 5777.

Sincerely,

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