

September 1, 2020

To Representative Kathy Crawford,

My name is Christine Spike, and I am a certified and licensed Speech Language Pathologist in Michigan. I have serviced Deaf and hard of hearing students across Oakland County, MI from preschool age to high school for the past twenty-three years. I am writing to share my support of LEAD-K Bill HB5836.

As a speech language pathologist, I believe language development to be a top priority, regardless of the language the child uses. In my experience, I have witnessed a strong bias in the system that encourages English over ASL. It is my belief that ASL should be promoted equally. Families should be educated on both languages equally and given the opportunity to make the best choice for their family and their child.

It is critical that LEAD-K gets passed to support Deaf children and their families. From an early age, Deaf children often lag behind their same age hearing peers in expressive and receptive language without intense support and a strong language base. Deaf children rely on visual support. If a child does not benefit from technology, or make a personal choice to provide technology, their child is often at risk to develop further language deprivation without the access to ASL.

It takes a village in a young child's life to grow and develop their skills. From an early age, families need to be provided with all options equally and without bias to make the best decision for their child in the area of language development and acquisition. In turn, families deserve to have their child evaluated in their native language and to understand their child's skills and abilities.

As professionals, we want to provide families with an accurate measure of their child's skills in their primary language, either English or American Sign Language. By passing LEAD-K, families will be supported, children will be supported and as a results, the community is supported. Passing LEAD-K would be a WIN-WIN for all families of Deaf children, the Deaf community and for professionals who serve the Deaf and hard of hearing population.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Spike

Christine Spike, M.A., CCC-SLP/L
Speech-Language Pathologist
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
Bloomfield Hills Schools

Testimony - LEAD-K - HB 5836

My name is Victoria Calaman Pfaff and I am giving testimony in **support** of House Bill 5836.

I am a Deaf constituent, an alumna of Michigan School for the Deaf (class of 2003), a member of the LEAD-K Team and have experience working with Deaf and hard of hearing children and their families in a variety of settings. I hold Masters Degrees in both Developmental Psychology (2010) and Linguistics (2013) from Gallaudet University, Washington, DC.

Your vote for House Bill 5836 will help ensure that deaf and hard of hearing children across the State of Michigan will be provided opportunities for language development and acquisition during the critical period (birth through age 5) when the human brain is primed for developing neural pathways for language.

The goal of this legislation is to track language development on a statewide basis so that deaf and hard of hearing students are prepared and ready to access kindergarten curriculum and develop English literacy on track with hearing peers. Through the establishment of an advisory committee to aid the Michigan Department of Education (the department), a resource will be developed and provided to parents and legal guardians of deaf and hard of hearing children allowing them to monitor and track the child's expressive and receptive language acquisition and developmental stages to English literacy. The department will target the stages of language development milestones typical of all children in this age range, provide assessments of appropriate language development standards, and, in cases where the child is not meeting or progressing toward the standards, provide for a statement explaining why the child is not progressing along with recommendations to assist the child in becoming linguistically prepared for kindergarten and English literacy.

What is equality in language acquisition? It is providing access to all options of natural languages and communication modes to families. This seems simple on the surface, however, the majority of deaf and hard of hearing children are born into hearing families. More than 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children have hearing parents who have little or no exposure to the Deaf community. Language acquisition becomes complicated and critical for these children because they do not have access to naturally occurring language rich environments (as opposed to hearing children born to hearing parents who are fluent users of spoken English or deaf and hard of hearing children born to Deaf parents who are fluent in ASL and written English). Language acquisition happens naturally when a child is immersed in an accessible language environment from birth.

Too many deaf or hard of hearing children in Michigan enter Kindergarten with gaps in their ability to expressively and receptively use language, which deeply impacts on their cognitive capacity for learning. With opportunities and exposure to full access of natural languages, the child can acquire new information easily. Delaying the introduction to full access to language development late in life causes the brain to miss important developmental milestones in the critical period of the first five years of life. After five years, the plasticity of the brain hardens and the window of optimal learning lowers causing language deprivation and lower academic performance much behind in their grade level. This bill will provide support in the children becoming kindergarten ready by the time they enter school.

I am the only Deaf member of my family. My parents, siblings and extended family are all hearing. I am one of the fortunate Deaf people from a hearing family who received early support and intervention that included access to and acquisition of ASL, Deaf role models and mentors, and opportunities to fully realize my academic potential by learning both ASL and English.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my viewpoint on this critical issue affecting deaf and hard of hearing children statewide. My contact information is provided below if you have questions.

I appreciate your concern for the children of Michigan and implore you to vote YES on HB 5836.

Victoria Calaman Pfaff, MA
5602 Adderstone Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
vmcala@gmail.com
(248) 605-3008

Dear Representatives Crawford and Bollin,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5836.

My name is Helen Boucher and I have been a Sign Language/English interpreter in the state of Michigan for approximately 30 years. I have seen the direct results of an educational system that has underserved our Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind children when I work with adults who are fluent in neither American Sign Language or English.

Many Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind children are language delayed and language deprived through no fault of their own. Our children are labeled "failures" as adults when truly they have not been given a fair chance to succeed. HB 5836 could go a long way in solving the problem by providing parents/guardians and the educational system with valuable information regarding the child's language acquisition and development.

Thank you, Representative Crawford, for your hard work on HB 5836. I greatly appreciate it. It will truly be a substantial benefit to Michigan children.

Thank you Representative Bollin for your time in reading this. I am respectfully requesting your support with a YES vote on HB 5836.

With highest regards for your tireless work in public service,

Helen Boucher

Helen Boucher
8954 Lee Rd
Brighton, Michigan
48116

To whom it may concern,

Hello my name is Sarah Houston, I am a child to Deaf parents, a mother to an 11 year old Deaf son, and a sign language interpreter who worked in the public school system for 6 years. I am here to talk about Lead K and how important LANGUAGE acquisition is during the critical age range of 0-5.

As a mother raising a Deaf child I see the importance of American Sign Language (ASL) in his life. My son is at the top of his class in reading and I attribute that to the fact that he has had ASL embedded into life since the day he was born.

I can say that because as a interpreter in the Educational system, I have seen the effect delayed language can have on a child. From a 16 yr old not knowing what the names are of toppings they like on their pizza, to having to explain important aspects of life like how to problem solve without resorting to extreme measures.

The emotional and mental scars left behind to Deaf children who are language deprived are heartbreaking and terrifying. Far too many Deaf children born to hearing parents who have no way of providing them with the resources needed to sustain stability in their lives. We have the opportunity to give the gift of LANGUAGE to ALL Deaf children born in the state of Michigan with this Lead -K Bill. It should be a no brainers to pass it. Let's do what is right for them it is our responsibility as a community to make sure this happens.

Thankfully and respectfully,
Sarah Houston

June 16, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am proud to be a Deaf person. I received an associate degree in Liberal Arts from Oakland Community College and my Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from Madonna University. I received my Master of Social Work (MSW) at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. Since 2015, I have been working at Deaf Community Advocacy Network (DEAF C.A.N.!) as a clinical social worker. My role at DEAF C.A.N.! is to provide behavioral health services and advocacy services to Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing clients in medical and legal settings. In addition, I'm an adjunct faculty at Oakland Community College's accredited Sign Language Interpreter Program.

As a Deaf person/professional, I fully support this bill, including HB 5836. If they have the ability to acquire a strong foundation of language, it will make a significant difference in the lives of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing children. Research has shown that language deprivation or delays between ages 0-5 is the leading cause of many Deaf children's eventual reading, academic, and social struggles. The type of language-rich environment and the quality of interaction to which children are exposed in the first five years of life greatly influence the outcomes of their adult lives.

The LEAD-K bill wants to make certain that all Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children are given a chance to develop a fluent and robust language by the time they enter kindergarten. Our current approach to educating these children has created several generations of deaf/hard of hearing youth with language deprivation and inadequate social development. This causes literacy delays and other problems that persist throughout life. Dr. Neil Glickman's work reveals a profound link between early language deprivation and mental illness in Deaf individuals.

The Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities are 2-5 times more likely to suffer from mental illness - often due to trauma, abuse and language deprivation. There is research that shows that 69% of Deaf clients experience childhood abuse or neglect. Only a handful of mental health professionals are known to provide direct, culturally and linguistically competent services to DDBHH individuals in Michigan. The LEAD-K is one of the critical steps to address gaps in mental health care for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in Michigan.

There is no question that it is time to close Michigan's access gap to education. The LEAD-K bill will allow Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children to learn, be happy, and thrive.

"The single great risk faced by Deaf children is inadequate exposure to a usable first language."

– Dr. Sanjay Gulati, Professor, Harvard Medical School

Sincerely,



Dylan Secord, MSW, LLMSW
Clinical Social Worker &
Adjunct Faculty

House Bill 5836 – Please vote YES!

My name is Rebecca Calaman. I strongly support the passage of HB 5836.

HB 5836 focuses on Language Equality and Acquisition specifically in American Sign Language (ASL) and English for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) during the critical period of language acquisition (ages birth to 5 years). During this time period, the human brain is shaped and prepared for literacy development, cognitive capacity is built, communication needs/abilities are established, and the groundwork is laid for future academic achievement. Far too many DHH children in Michigan are beginning kindergarten without these basic and critical language foundations.

Children who are DHH are visual learners. Spoken language is not easily processed by many, if not most, of these learners. ASL is a visual gestural language which presents information in a way that is easily processed by the brain. According to the research of Dr Laura Ann Petitto, renowned cognitive neuroscientist: “The human brain does not discriminate between the hands and the tongue. People discriminate, but not our biological human brain.” For further reading, <https://v12.gallaudet.edu/pen-program/pen-faculty/laura-ann-petitto/>.

LEAD-K Michigan (leadkmich@gmail.com) has been working with Michigan legislators to pass a bill that will address the language development needs of all DHH children in Michigan. LEAD-K recognizes the critical need for both languages to be codified in law. LEAD-K laws have already been passed in California, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, New Jersey, Georgia, Hawaii, Connecticut, Maine, Oregon, South Dakota and Texas with several other states working on passing legislation. For more information on LEAD-K, visit www.lead-k.org.

This issue is important to me on both personal and professional levels.

As the parent of a Deaf adult, I became involved in fighting for my child’s right to equal access to language acquisition (both ASL and English) when she was still an infant. Our early intervention teacher introduced us to ASL and the Deaf Community where we had access to Deaf mentors, language models and role models for our daughter. I was given options and opportunities. Many families across Michigan are not being given language options or opportunities.

As a licensed professional counselor, I have worked with many families over the past 30 years and have witnessed too many DHH children enter school not ready to learn because of language deprivation. They do not have foundations in either ASL or English. These language delays are difficult to overcome. Please help us gain equality in language development for all DHH babies and young children in Michigan.

I respectfully ask you to vote YES on House Bill 5836.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Calaman, MA, NCC, LPC
3304 Schoolhouse Drive, Waterford, MI 48329
248 599 9771
beccacalaman@gmail.com

*Chris Hench
9812 Cranston
Livonia, MI 48150
dalehench@ameritech.net*

September 1, 2020

Dear Legislators,

HB5836 , or Lead-K, is *essential* to the well being of Michigan children who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

My husband and I are hearing. We knew nothing about Deafness when our son was born. At first, we relied on doctors and educators for advice. The advice we got was horrible. We were told that he must be taught to be 'oral,' that we should never use sign language with him, that he would 'learn to hear,' that 'every deaf child deserves the right to fail in an oral program.'

Luckily, we also sought out Deaf adults, which lead to learning American Sign Language ourselves and enrolling our son in school program that included sign language.

Today, our son is a happy, well-adjusted college graduate who works as a Japanese to English translator, tour guide, and teacher. He is also a world traveler and activist.

Had we followed the initial advice we'd received, our son's life would have been bleak. He would be language-delay or deprived of language altogether. Without language, his brain would not develop properly. This is the fate of far too many Deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Like our son, 90% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents who know nothing about Deafness. Faced with professionals who tell them that their child can be successful only if they avoid sign, they often follow this often disasterous path. These children experience depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation, substance abuse at a far higher rate than the general population. They often rely on government benefits for support.

LEAD-K does not take choice from parents. But if a child is falling behind, educators will need to present other options. This legislation can be the beginning of success for Deaf and hard-of-hearing Michigan citizens.

Sincerely,

Chris Hench

September 1, 2020

To Whom It May Concern-

My name is Beth Caverly. I am the mom of 4 children, now adults, two of whom are Deaf. My daughter, Colleen, grew up hard-of-hearing and lost her residual hearing while in graduate school at Gallaudet University. My son, Joe, has a profound hearing loss.

The kids began their road to learning after diagnosis of their hearing loss at age 2.5 and 1.5, in 1991. They were diagnosed together at this time, before newborn screening became commonplace. Both kids were placed in the Oral Program through Oakland County, Colleen beginning 3 year old preschool and Joe in the baby program. Colleen went through mainstream school for most of her preschool-12 grade education. Joe attended the oral program through first grade, then transitioned to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program in Bloomfield Hills. He was falling further and further behind in LANGUAGE because of this deficit of hearing. By the time he entered 4th grade, he was mainstreamed full time with an interpreter while receiving DHH support throughout his elementary, middle and high school years. These two children are now college graduates, one a PhD psychologist and the other an actor/director.

I began my education in Deaf culture and American Sign Language when my children were diagnosed. I had not ever met a Deaf person prior to my kids being diagnosed and consequently becoming involved with the baby program through Oakland Schools. I had to learn a new way of communicating with my children that would teach them to learn and understand English.

As a parent, I would not have had the knowledge or support to help my children thrive if it wasn't for the baby program in Oakland County. I met and am still friends with other moms who were having the same overwhelming feelings I had. We learned, supported, vented and rejoiced in our children's milestones. I have met and am still friends with the teachers and interpreters who paved the way for my kids to understand the crazy world of the English language. This was my second family; these women and men were my supports. They helped me find the courage to venture into uncharted territory. Without fellow parents and the team of teachers and interpreters, my kids would have suffered. I NEEDED those professionals and other parents to learn.

A parent who has a child who is diagnosed with a hearing loss, no matter if they decide to use the oral or manual modes of communication NEED to become a "professional parent". If a parent decides to elect surgery for a cochlear implant, they still need to realize the need for sign language as a means to support spoken language. LANGUAGE is the key. Support is the key.

Lead-K is an important campaign that can have a positive impact on Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. As more and more programs for DHH are shuttering and kids are being educated in their home district without a strong support system in place to help, language may not be developed in these early stages. I encourage you to invest in some time to educate yourself the importance of this campaign. It is in the best interest of all DHH children.

Thank you in advance of all children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing-

Beth Caverly

caverlybeth@gmail.com

248.789.1767

Detroit Black Deaf Advocates # 6

June 20, 2020

To: State Representative Kathy Crawford

Subject: HB-5836 Bill

Dear Ms. Crawford,

Detroit Black Deaf Advocates (DBDA) is non profit advocacy organization .

We the DBDA chapter support the LEAD-K BILL(HB-5836) . Its important to have this bill to be pass in the House in the State of Michigan. This bill could help black deaf and hard of hearing babies to have an access to language at early age. The bill will also give resources to parents and /or guardian to monitor their child(s) language development at early age. We need your help to have this Lead -K bill passed. It is very important to Deaf, Hard of Hearing community in the State of Michigan.

Respectfully,

LaToya Pate

President-DBDA

CC: Detroit Black Deaf Advocates Board Members

Detroit Black Deaf Advocates . Po Box 32348 Detroit , Michigan 48233



June 12th, 2020

Representative Crawford
S-877 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Rep. Crawford,

Detroit Disability Power's mission is to leverage and build the organizing power of the disability community to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities in Metro Detroit. We work across disabilities, serving people with ambulatory disabilities, mental health disabilities, intellectual disabilities, chronic illness, blindness, Deafness and more.

We are writing today to express our support for HB-5836, also known as LEAD-K. This bill will help alleviate a persistent challenge for families with young children who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Language deprivation at an early age can create hardship that last a lifetime. Beyond the significant detriment of isolation, kids without access to language are ill prepared for starting school, which makes it hard for them to keep up throughout their education and later in their career.

This landmark piece of legislation would greatly improve language acquisition in the State of Michigan for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students ages 0-5. Similar bills have recently been passed in 14 states.

We support Michigan being next.

Thank you,


Dessa Cosma, Executive Director
Detroit Disability Power



To Representative Kathy Crawford:

The Michigan Deaf Association fully supports the Lead-K House Bill 5836, and would appreciate your support to help deaf and hard of hearing children have every opportunity to succeed.

Our organization has represented Deaf Michiganders for more than one-hundred years, advocating for and listening to our community. Language deprivation is a persistent issue in our community, with some deaf and hard of hearing children having no access to American Sign Language, English, or any other language before they start elementary school. This creates a lasting effect that *can* be prevented. All children have the right to thrive.

House Bill 5836 is an important step to helping Deaf children become "kindergarten ready", for standardizing education and communication requirements, and fairly represents all options that should be made available to families with deaf and hard of hearing children.

We are asking you as our representative to support House Bill 5836; to support the civil rights of deaf and hard of hearing children here in Michigan. Similar Lead-K bills have been passed in fourteen states and Michigan should be number fifteen.

Thank you for your support,

Michigan Deaf Association

LEAD-K[®]

LANGUAGE EQUALITY & ACQUISITION FOR DEAF KIDS

June 13, 2020

State Representative Kathy Crawford
KathyCrawford@house.mi.gov

Dear Honorable Crawford:

Congratulations on taking up the LEAD-K bill that could become one of the more important legislation for the deaf and hard of hearing children in the State of Michigan. The national LEAD-K team is happy to write this letter of support for the LEAD-K Michigan team to pass this important bill, House Bill No. 5836.

The goal of HB 5836 is to ensure that DHH children become Kindergarten-ready at five years old. To ensure their readiness would require providing access to language for those DHH children.

DHH children are very capable of achieving language milestones that are on par with their hearing peers. And with the passage of HB 5836, they will have more opportunities to attain those milestones. Their Kindergarten-readiness will then provide them with opportunities to achieve grade-level academics.

As you might already know, deaf and hard of hearing children need access to language in their homes and at schools. HB 5836 will ensure that professionals and parents become knowledgeable about the important issues of language access, language acquisition, language development, and, more importantly, the negative impacts of language deprivation syndrome on those DHH children.

HB 5836 addresses the most fundamental issues of DHH children in Michigan, and you might be interested in knowing that in the fall of 2017, an agreement between LEAD-K and Alexander Graham Bell Association: <http://www.lead-k.org/posts/lead-k-and-ag-bell-reach-historic-agreement/> to support the model bill, <http://www.lead-k.org/model-legislation-for-states/>.

We applaud you for taking up an important legislative effort. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sheri Farinha, Director
LEAD-K Legislative Campaign

MICHIGAN



HANDS &
VOICES™

MICHIGAN HANDS & VOICES

P.O. Box 71038 Rochester Hills, MI 48307

June 22, 2020

RE: Support LEAD-K Bill (HB-5836)

Dear Representative Kathy Crawford,

Michigan Hands & Voices supports the LEAD-K Bill (HB-5836), which is designed to ensure each and every Deaf or Hard of Hearing child in Michigan can develop language. Currently in Michigan, there is limited resources and support for schools and families with regards to testing and tracking language for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

We all know that language deprivation has a huge negative impact on Deaf and Hard of Hearing children being KINDERGARTEN READY! Language begins at home, but the majority of our deaf babies are in homes where there is no or minimal access to language, e.g. are born to parents with typical hearing levels. In fact, over 90% of children born deaf or hard of hearing are born to parents with typical hearing. That is why we support the LEAD-K bill.

Our organization believes that this landmark piece of legislation would greatly improve language acquisition in the State of Michigan for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students ages 0-5. Once LEAD-K becomes law, the work would begin to develop a resource for parents/legal guardians to monitor and track a child's expressive and receptive language acquisition and developmental stages, including milestones, appropriate assessments and delivery.

We believe this aligns with our Michigan Hands & Voices mission in supporting children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to meet their fullest potentials. The LEAD-K bill has recently been passed in 14 states. We join the LEAD-K Michigan Core Team in asking for your support of House Bill HB-5836. Would you please join us?

Regards,

Janel Frost
Michigan Hands & Voices Executive Director

WWW.MIHANDSANDVOICES.ORG
248.845.8762

FLINT ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF AUXILIARY
4156 Holiday Drive
Flint, MI 48507

June 12, 2020

Dear State Representative Kathy Crawford

Flint Association of the Deaf Auxiliary is a nonprofit organization with approximately 100 Auxiliary members. This organization started in 1930 and is still active today.

We are aware and concerned of the effects of language deprivation with our deaf and hard of hearing members. We share stories of how we were deprived of language at an early age and how this stopped us from gaining better education and employment. We strongly believe that if there was a law in effect years ago, many of us would not feel cheated of such opportunities.

We strongly support House Bill 5836. This would create better language equality and acquisition for children aged 0-5 and resources for parents of the deaf and hard of hearing children.

We believe that once this Bill passes and becomes a law, the deaf and hard of hearing children will have golden opportunities especially for parents who need resources on what their deaf and hard of hearing child needs.

Sincerely yours,

Hallie Smith
President

June 12, 2010

Honorable Kathy Crawford
KathyCrawford@house.mi.gov

Dear Representative Crawford,

Flint Association of the Deaf (FAD) supports House Bill **HB 5836** all the way.

FAD is a non-profit organization serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens from around Genesee County. We are proud to inform you that the club celebrated its 100th anniversary in Fall 2019. Its membership averages 180 members per year.

Many of our members suffered language deprivation when they were little. We strongly believe that language deprivation among the young Deaf and Hard of Hearing children should not continue to happen. We believe this LEAD-K Michigan bill (HB 5836) will help make the change. So, please pass this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tommy Saylor, President
Flint Association of the Deaf
4156 Holiday Drive
Flint, Michigan 48507

June 14, 2020

Dear State Representative Kelly Crawford,

We, Metro Detroit Deaf Senior Citizens, support house bill 5836 for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children ages 0-5. Research has proven that language deprivation at home has a negative impact on Deaf and Hard of Hearing children when entering kindergarten. These children do not have access to American Sign Language at home. We want parents of these children to have access and the ability to allow said children to have language to communicate and further their developmental skills by allowing them to be expressive and receptive. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children need American Sign Language to be able to communicate with their family members, school educators, and peers. We want to see them be successful with both American Sign Language and English. Please support HB-5836.

Thank you,

Metro Detroit Deaf Senior Citizens
Dale Martin, President
Donna Klarr, Vice President
Henry Strandell, Treasurer
Melody Sharpe, Secretary

MDDSC
665 E. Summit St.
Milford, MI 48381



Detroit Association of the Deaf

1263 Maple Blvd.

Monroe, MI 48162

June 14, 2020

Re: HB 5836 – LEAD-K

Dear Honorable Representative Crawford,

We, Detroit Association of the Deaf, fully support this House Bill 5836. Most of us have personally experienced or have seen the lack of language in our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children. It is painful and sad to see our children not having equal and effective access to language and the education they deserved.

There are children whose language is deprived and struggle to understand their surroundings. They are not able to convey their needs or wants. A language deprived child might not be able to communicate if they are sick or suffering. The delayed language exposure will make another impact when the children enter school. Social development and Educational capabilities are all influenced by language.

The goal is to ensure a child has a foundation of effective communication before entering kindergarten.

Having successful communication that starts begins at home builds a foundation needed to ensure a prosperous adulthood. A life that is fully rich with life skills, college, trade schools, STEM, and a career is what we owe to our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children.

As stated in LEADK, there are research and data supporting language equality and acquisition. To get more information, please go to www.lead-k.org.

The Detroit Association of the Deaf is a proud club consisting of rich diversity of people from walks of life with various of educational and family backgrounds. We thrive to welcome people who are supportive to our Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing members and our mission.

Respectively,

Detroit Association of the Deaf
1263 Maple Blvd.
Monroe, MI 48162
www.dadclub.org
dadinformation@gmail.com



June 10, 2020

Dear Representative Crawford,

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, a 501c3, non-profit agency, located in Grand Rapids Michigan, fully supports House Bill 5836.

We are the largest non-profit agency in West Michigan, that covers 27 counties and services the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing communities.

Thank you for supporting the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Deb Atwood

Deb Atwood
Executive Director

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services

3680 44th St SE – STE 201, Kentwood, MI 49512 P 616.732.7358 F 616.732.7365 www.deafhhs.org

EIN: 82-055112



June 8, 2020

Family Children and Seniors Committee
Lansing, MI

Dear Representative Kathy Crawford and Committee:

Communication Access Center (C.A.C.) is a non-profit agency that has served the Deaf community for over 50 years. CAC is very aware of the effects of language deprivation on deaf and hard of hearing people. Many of the individuals we serve share stories of their educational experience where they felt pushed through the educational system simply because they were deaf. We believe if such a bill was in place years ago, many of our Deaf citizens would have had a greater opportunity to attain gainful employment or even pursue a higher education and not rely on the system for financial support.

We understand there is currently a Bill up for consideration that addresses language equality and acquisition for children 0-5 and parent resources

C.A.C. totally supports HB-5836 and believes that once it becomes law, the deaf and hard of hearing children of Michigan will have opportunities that they have never had before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Frelich".

Margaret Frelich
Board President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresa Wjorako".

Theresa Wjorako,
Executive Director

COMMUNICATION ACCESS CENTER
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

1277 West Court St. • Flint, Michigan 48503

Phone: 810-239-3112 • Fax: 810-239-1606

E-mail: info@CACDHH.org • Website: www.CACDHH.org

Joy Brewer

From: Janet Jirus <caicslansing@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2020 1:35 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: Re Janet Jirus/ Support - HB 5836

Honorable Chair and Committee Members-

As the daughter of Deaf adults who were raised in an era where children's access to thrive at an early age, through rich language exposure was all but ignored, I urge you to right the wrongs of the past and current practice of the early language deprivation of Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing children, I wholeheartedly support HB 5836.

My parents were educated during the 1930's -1950's, different educational experiences but sharing the common thread of opportunities foregone. Those decisions determined by educational experts. My mother became Deaf at an early age, dismissed from school and denied an education for many years until a school for the Deaf welcomed her with open arms, though she knew no sign language. My father, enrolled in a school for the Deaf from an early age, yet not allowed to sign or be educated in the preferred language method of his parents, from pre-K into his teens.

Statistics and research have proven that time and time again, , access to rich language exposure in the earliest years of development sets forth the foundation for a child to excel in their own unique and individual ways. Placing them on equal grounding with their peers, leveling the educational playing field. Your support of this urgent legislation will assist in holding those accountable that have partaken in decades of systematic transgressions against children. Children who are deserving of all opportunities that will enrich their lives not only in the years of 1930, 1940 and 2020 but for all times.

I speak on behalf of my late parents when I ask you to seize this opportunity and vote in support of HB 5836. Important legislation, that will protect the civil rights of Michigan's Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Janet Jirus, RID CI/CT
Daughter of Deaf Parents
Nationally Certified Interpreter

Joy Brewer

From: Debbie Mitre-Smith <debbie.mitresmith@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 9:06 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5836

I am writing this email asking you to support the LEAD-K bill (HB 5836).

This bill is critical for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Please let 2020 be the year to end language deprivation.

Thank you,
Debbie

Joy Brewer

From: tracey Bauer <tabauer333@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 8:04 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Voted

hp 5836 thanks

Joy Brewer

From: Diana Snider <dianasnider6@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:48 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5836

Please support the HB 5836 in the best interest of deaf child. Thank you, Diana Lambert-Snider
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Joy Brewer

From: deepiti.sang <deepiti.sang@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:38 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: I support 5836.

Hello.

I am Deepti Sanagavarapu. I grew up Michigan and I am hard of hearing. Presently I am in Philadelphia. I always to get update Lead k. It is very important to learn and access to communicate American Sign Language for children in their future.

I support 5836.

Thank you.

Deepti

--

Practice the pause. Pause before judging. Pause before assuming. Pause before accusing. Pause whenever you're about to react harshly and you'll avoid doing and saying things you'll later regret.

- Lori Deschene

Joy Brewer

From: Diana Campbell <dsoupo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 6:35 PM
To: Joy Brewer

To Joy Brewer,

I am supporting HB #5836 for LEAD-K. I work as a mentor with DeafBlind child since he was two years old. I believe all Deaf/DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing child should have a Deaf mentor to help their language, Deaf Culture.

Please HB #5836 passed

Di Campbell
LEAD-K Advocacy

Joy Brewer

From: Carina Grennan <cgrennan@bloomfield.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 5:04 PM
To: Joy Brewer

Hi I am writing to support HB5836 (lead-k). I am a teacher of the deaf and I see the lifelong detriments of children not being provided a language from birth. Many parents are given the false info that American Sign Language will be a detriment to their child learning to "talk". The exact opposite is true. I have MANY children that I have seen that will be behind their whole life because they didn't have language from birth. Think about how hard it is to learn a language when you are older. Children can become bilingual even trilingual without even trying when given language young enough. We also need for the sake of these children need ASL assessments and a fair and comprehensive parent information book.

--

Thank you for reading this and have a blessed day.

Carina Grennan

Teacher

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

East Hills Middle School

cgrennan@bloomfield.org

248-341-6200

Joy Brewer

From: David Sharpe <sharpegoblue@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 4:49 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Lead-K

Support Lead-K HB 5836

Joy Brewer

From: Ron Deschler <deschler56@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 3:29 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB-5836

I was unable to attend the hearing on HB-5836 this morning.
I am supporting this bill. The need for deaf children 0-5 Language assessment is very important.
When I was diagnosed for hearing loss at six years old They did not check on my language development.
So I believe this House Bill 5836. Please support it.

Thank you
Janet Deschler

Sent from my iPad

Joy Brewer

From: Sonja Miller <sonjasmiller@me.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 3:12 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Please support

Please support HB-5836
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Sonja

Joy Brewer

From: Janet Carter <jancodaterp@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:45 PM
To: Joy Brewer; Joy Brewer
Subject: HB-5836

I am wholeheartedly in SUPPORT of HB-5836

Sincerely,
Janet Carter
1813 Rockcreek Lane
Flint, MI 48507
810-814-4952
Sent from my iPhone

Joy Brewer

From: Caroll Schlorff <cmschlorff@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:41 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB5836

Please support HB 5836.

Thank you
Caroll Schlorff

Sent from my iPad

Joy Brewer

From: Diana Snider <dianasnider6@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:39 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB-5836

Please support the Bill of HB-5836 for the best interest in deaf child. Thank you, Diana Lambert-Snider

Joy Brewer

From: xxy2xy53 <xxy2xy53@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 11:43 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Lead-in, Pass the BILL 5836

James Michael and Theresa Marie Love. We support Lead-K, please pass the bill 5836.
Thanks!

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S9+.

Joy Brewer

From: Rowan O'Dougherty <rodougherty@grcc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 11:35 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Cc: Rep. Tommy Brann (District 77)
Subject: Letter in Support of HB 5836

Dear Rep. Crawford, Committee Members and the Michigan House of Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB 5836.

I am Deaf, a member of the West Michigan Deaf Community, and a professor at Grand Rapids Community College where I teach American Sign Language along with Deaf Culture and History. I am the board president for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, a 501(c)(3) human service agency that serves over 27 counties in West Michigan. I am also a treasurer for the Michigan Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, where in addition to my duties I serve as an advisor for professional development.

HB 5836 is an important bill for it allows parents of Deaf children to have access to all the information and resources they need to make educated decisions on how to raise their child and to make sure their child meets the standard language milestones. This bill will also make sure that our Deaf Michiganders will be kindergarten-ready, and would assure their success for the rest of their lives.

I strongly believe it would be irresponsible if this bill is not passed into law and to continue to leave a majority of our very young Deaf and hard of hearing Michiganders behind in the acquisition of language mastery and future success.

Yours truly,
Rowan O'Dougherty

Joy Brewer

From: Erin Seipke-Brown <eseipke-brown@bloomfield.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:53 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB-5836 SUPPORT

Good morning,

I am writing to ask for your SUPPORT for HB-5836.

As an educational ASL-English interpreter, who has worked with Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students for more than 20 years, I have seen the impacts of language acquisition and language deprivation on DDBHH students.

This legislation is a critical component to ensuring that students in our state who experience hearing loss will receive appropriate interventions to improve their educational access and language skills, on par with their non-disabled peers.

It is time the State of Michigan steps up in support of some of our most vulnerable learners, and puts legislation in place that will help provide these students the necessary means of ensuring appropriate linguistic development.

Without strong linguistic knowledge, these students will struggle through school, may never have the opportunity to attend college, and will experience limited employment opportunities into adulthood. However, by supporting this bill and granting local education agencies the means to monitor language milestones, to provide appropriate interventions when necessary, we can improve their chances to actually receive their legal right to receive a free and appropriate education, to find educational success, and to build the futures they dream of.

We owe it to these students to get this legislation passed.

In support of DHH students,
Erin Seipke-Brown

Erin Seipke-Brown

B.A., RID NIC/Ed K-12, MI BEI II, EIPA

Interpreter, D/HH Program

ph: 248-341-6894

ESeipke-Brown@bloomfield.org

<http://www.bloomfield.org>

"The ability to communicate effectively is essential to the human experience and necessary for cognitive development, social and emotional well-being, linguistic competence and academic growth." - National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE, 2006)

Joy Brewer

From: Beth Rutkowski <rutkowski.be@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:28 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Lead k bill HB 5837

We support this bill

Show you support LEAD-K Bill (HB5836)

ASL is a human right and our families should have the option.

Joy Brewer

From: Doug & Becky <dougandbecky03@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:22 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5836

HB 5835 SUPPORT

Joy Brewer

From: Jen DeMeritt <troubleguard@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:17 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB # 5836

ASL testing and assessments ARE CRITICAL TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEAF CHILDREN AND CHILDREN WITH ANY LEVEL OF HEARING LOSS! Sign Language is a HUMAN RIGHT!!

PLEASE PASS HR 5836

Thank you
Jennifer and Derrick DeMeritt

Joy Brewer

From: Patty Schultz <pattyschultz53@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:16 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K

I support LEAD-K. The reason I work as ASL mentor with hearing families of deaf children. I've been seen how the processing of deaf/HH children are successful with ASL! Language happens in the brain, not on the lips.

Thank you,
Patty Schultz

Joy Brewer

From: Kathy Derderian <cheyennkat@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 10:15 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Michigan Lead K 5836

Hello,

I am Kathy Derderian and my husband is Gary. We both are Deaf. We support Lead K 5836 ! We wish we had the opportunity with ASL and English language when we were young. We believe parents with Deaf child(children) now would benefit from Lead K with resources provided for parents. Very important ! My parents wish they had the resources back then , they had nothing but to send us to oral school and to depend on lip reading. Just tough!

Thank you !

Kathy Derderian

Joy Brewer

From: Angela Katcher <iangelamobile@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Support house hb 5836

I support that

Support house hb 5836 Thank you

Angela
Sent from my iPhone

Joy Brewer

From: Jodi Seres <jodirae.seres@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 9:25 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5386

Hi,

I'm deaf, Jodi Seres. I'm support HB 5386, I work for Bloomfield Hills school with deaf/hard of hearing kids for 23 years. I have seen there need to help with kids improve their ASL language when they are in 0 to 5 years old.

Also I have a grandson who is deaf and nothing there good school for my grandson and other kids too which not enough assess ASL Language.

Thank you for your time to listen us.

Jodi Seres

Sent from my iPad