

From: Yuliette Parks <yulietteparks@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 7:44 PM

To: Joy Brewer <JoyBrewer@house.mi.gov>

Subject: Please support the bill HB5777

To Families, Children and Seniors Committee,

I am a Deaf Education teacher in Genesee County. I teach students with varying degrees of hearing loss. Some of my students are hard of hearing while other are profoundly deaf. The largest issue I deal with within my classroom is trying to teach content to those students who are language deprived.

Often, students come to our school after experiencing failure in other oral programs. These students will come to us as late as 9th– 10th grade. By this time, they have gone 15+ years with no mastery of language. This is of no fault of their own but due to the fact that their parent(s) did not have the resources to make a sound decision on what should be the language of instruction to their child. At this age, the student will almost always have language deprivation for the rest of his/her life.

Unfortunately these children are a product of a failed Michigan Deaf education system. For these reasons, I STRONGLY support HB 5777. Language needs to be acquired during the critical years (birth – age 5) for language development.

I would like to share a personal experience. I am Deaf myself and attended school for the deaf as well as mainstreaming. I learned better at the deaf school compared to mainstream. All the teachers signed and I was able to learn all the subjects. When I was in the mainstream, I was overwhelmed and stressed. They held me back and I had to redo my grade. I was a lot happier at the deaf school and I felt that I belonged. I was able to communicate with my peers and improve my language a lot faster. I am a substitute teacher currently at the Michigan school for the Deaf and I can see when students thrive as they learn very quickly on daily basis. I have witnessed a couple of children who missed school a couple of weeks or months and returned have lost their education and structure. It's critical for them to continue to show up and learn everyday starting at a young age.

If you care about language deprivation, equality for all and parental CHOICE, I ask you to vote for and support HB 5777.

Thank you for reading,

Yuliette Parks

Yulietteparks@gmail.com

810-309-9004

03/14/2022
Sarah Woodworth
3469 Clearwater Dr
Davison, MI, 48423

Dear Committee,

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

Deaf and hard of hearing children are at a high risk of limited language access causing language deprivation which will follow them throughout life. LEAD-K supports young children who are deaf and hard of hearing to have a strong language foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. This bill also provides a parent resource.

I am a child of deaf adults. (CODA) My mother and father are both deaf. My mom's family tried to make her use oral (English) and try to learn to read lips. My father went to a deaf institute and learned American Sign Language (ASL) while learning English at the same time. My father being exposed to ASL made his life in general much better. He has a good paying job and understands English clearly. My mother being forced to be oral is very different from my father. She can't read or write English and she doesn't understand the right concepts to English terms. She's collected money from the state her whole life and never held a job. I've also worked in deaf programs for the last 16 years and I promise you American Sign Language is the key. A student has to have a way to express themselves and every student is unique and requires different ways to learn.

I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Sincerely,
Sarah Woodworth
swoodworth@bloomfield.org
(810) 449-5566

March 14, 2022

To Families, Children and Seniors Committee

I am a Deaf Education teacher in Genesee County. I teach students with varying degrees of hearing loss. Some of my students are hard of hearing while other are profoundly deaf. The largest issue I deal with within my classroom is trying to teach content to those students who are language deprived.

Often, students come to our school after experiencing failure in other oral programs. These students will come to us as late as 9th – 10th grade. By this time, they have gone 15+ years with no mastery of language. This is of no fault of their own but due to the fact that their parent(s) did not have the resources to make a sound decision on what should be the language of instruction to their child. At this age, the student will almost always have language deprivation for the rest of his/her life.

Unfortunately, these children are a product of a failed Michigan Deaf education system. For these reasons, I STRONGLY support HB 5777. Language needs to be acquired during the critical years (birth – age 5) for language development.

I would like to share a personal experiences. I attended an oral school in Detroit back in 1963. Never did I receive quality of education until I transferred to the Michigan School for the Deaf in 1975. MSD has changed my life whereas the teachers and the staff used American Sign Language to educate us the Deaf children. I am forever grateful to the Michigan School for the Deaf.

If you care about language deprivation, equality for all and parental CHOICE, I ask you to vote for and support HB 5777.

Sincerely,
Camille Jeter-Lorello
ASL Specialist
Jeterloreello.camille@gmail.com
732-298-6016

March 14, 2022

Dear Committee Clerk Joy Brewer

This is letter to inform you that I do SUPPORT of HB 5777.

I'm Deaf single mom ASL user with grown two daughters who is now Children of Deaf Adults. I always have been making sure that my daughters were getting excellent and positive education in order they deserved to success. Where I had to make sure they were getting spoken English in early intervention program as teacher put the effort to teach for my girls. With that for all young Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing children, where the teachers, audiologists and others were just focus teaching children by to do reading lip, use voice to talk, or hearing aid where they forgot it is very difficult to watch people's mouth moving and trying understand what they were saying because no ASL language foundation were set up at that early age. How do I know that because I was one of them went through this same type setting. Also, I have been through many negative experience at school where they kept saying we Deaf cannot do it or won't listen us our thought of it. They just disregarding our feeling or desire to thrive more, because they believed they know the best for us where they are totally wrong.

The truth is they do not know the best for us at all. We DEAF have seen what we went through struggle/lack of language, isolation, loss of identify, and low self-esteem. Which is why WE wanted the change for BEST for our currently and future children where this HB 5777 will give them ASL language foundation to start with at age 0-5 earlier, rather than later to avoid the language development delay. WE, DEAF do know and do not want currently and future children suffer the same things has been happening ongoing for many many years where we went through as it has to stop and need make the change for better. Once we have HB 5777 pass and the children will be THRIVING having appropriate learning the language even more than we did in the past.

Thank you

Susan Lundy

5731 Savoy Dr

Waterford, Mich 48327

March 11, 2022

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 from Gallaudet University, 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

Joy Brewer

From: Becca Calaman <beccacalaman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 11:19 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5777 - please support this important Bill!
Attachments: HB 5777 testimony March 2022.pdf

Attached is my letter of support for HB 5777.

Thank you!

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

Joy Brewer

From: Kristin Wilks <kawilks92@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 12:09 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K HB 5777

Hi Joy Brewer,

My name is Kristin Wilks and I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

Deaf and hard of hearing children are at a high risk of limited language access causing language deprivation which will follow them throughout life. LEAD-K supports young children who are deaf and hard of hearing to have a strong language foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. This bill also provides a parent resource.

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Thank you,

Kristin Wilks

Joy Brewer

From: Steven Wilks <stevenwilks89@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 12:12 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K HB 5777 Support

Hi Joy Brewer,

My name is Steven Wilks and I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Thank you,

Steven Wilks

Joy Brewer

From: Jodi Seres <jodirae.seres@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 1:18 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Support Lead-k hb 5777

March 13, 2022

Jodi Seres
226 Hurondale Dr.
White Lake, MI. 48386

Dear Chairperson Representative Rodney Wakeman,

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this. LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Sincerely,
Jodi Seres
Jodirae.seres@yahoo.com
(248) 256-5173

Sent from my iPhone

Joy Brewer

From: Sarah Houston <sarahbhouston78@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 1:41 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB5777

I am strongly in support of this bill. As a mother to a Deaf son, a child of Deaf adults, and a sign language interpreter who has worked in Education for 7 years I have seen clearly the effects of not being exposed to language at an early age. I knew of children who at 16 years old couldn't say what they wanted on their pizza. When my son who has been exposed to ASL since birth at 7 years old knew exactly what he wanted on his pizza extra cheese and all.

These kids need LANGUAGE and it doesn't matter that it's visual and not auditory. Visual is what's naturally theirs and the only way to get 100% access to language!!

We have hurt our children long enough Deaf children have been suffering since before my parents time. It is 2020 and we see the things that Deaf people can and are doing now. Doctors Lawyers, actors, film directors and so much more. And we can make that for path more easy and accessible than them that paved the way before them!! Let's give them an equal opportunity as their hearing peers. Let's give them EQUITY!!!

PASS THIS BILL!!!!!!

Thank you,
Sarah..... A MOM

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:15 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: PLEASE SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 5777

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jen DeMeritt <troubleguard@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 10:25 AM
Subject: PLEASE SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 5777
To: rodneywakeman@house.mi.gov <rodneywakeman@house.mi.gov>

3/14/22

Jennifer DeMeritt

686 Leyland Ct

Lake Orion, MI 48362

Dear Rep Wakeman ,

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

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Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:15 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: LEAD-K. HB 5777

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sonja Miller** <slyonmiller@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 12:40 PM
Subject: LEAD-K. HB 5777
To: <RodneyWakeman@house.mi.gov>

PLEASE PASS LEAD-K HB 5777
VERY IMPORTANT!!!!
THANK YOU,
Sonja from Roscommon

Sent from my iPhone

Sonja

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:16 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: LEAD-K - HB 5777

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kelly Monette <kgovan4@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 8:07 AM
Subject: LEAD-K - HB 5777
To: <rodneywakeman@house.mi.gov>
Cc: <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>, <lukemeerman@house.mi.gov>, <lauriepohutsky@house.mi.gov>, <dairerendon@house.mi.gov>, <johnroth@house.mi.gov>, <marktisdell@house.mi.gov>, <darrincamilleri@house.mi.gov>, <brendecarter@house.mi.gov>, <abrahamaiyash@house.mi.gov>

Kelly Monette
5524 Cleary Dr.
Waterford Twp, MI 48329

Dear Representative Wakeman,

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Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this. LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly Monette

kgovan4@gmail.com

(734) 968-9663

March 11, 2022

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 from Gallaudet University, 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

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:19 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Re: LEAD-K - HB 5777

Thank you

Freida

On Mar 14, 2022, at 2:15 PM, Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kelly Monette <kgovan4@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 8:07 AM
Subject: LEAD-K - HB 5777
To: <rodneywakeman@house.mi.gov>
Cc: <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>, <lukemeerman@house.mi.gov>, <lauriepohutsky@house.mi.gov>, <dairerendon@house.mi.gov>, <johnroth@house.mi.gov>, <marktisdel@house.mi.gov>, <darrincamilleri@house.mi.gov>, <brendecarter@house.mi.gov>, <abrahamaiyash@house.mi.gov>

Kelly Monette
5524 Cleary Dr.
Waterford Twp, MI 48329

Dear Representative Wakeman,

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly Monette

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:19 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Re: Letter of Support for LEAD-K HB 5777
Attachments: Lead-K letter.docx

Beth
Thank you

Freida

On Mar 14, 2022, at 2:16 PM, Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Elizabeth Caverly <caverlybeth@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 8:00 AM
Subject: Letter of Support for LEAD-K HB 5777
To: <RodneyWakeman@house.mi.gov>, <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>

I am happy to speak more of the importance of LANGUAGE for our Birth-5 Population.

--

Beth Caverly

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:20 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: Support LEAD-K HB 5777

Freida

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jodi Seres <jodirae.seres@yahoo.com>
Date: March 13, 2022 at 8:14:54 PM EDT
To: RodneyWakeman@house.mi.gov
Subject: Support LEAD-K HB 5777

March 13, 2022

Jodi Seres
226 Hurondale Dr.
White Lake, MI. 48386

Dear Chairperson Representative Rodney Wakeman,

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this. LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

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I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Sincerely,
Jodi Seres
Jodirae.seres@yahoo.com

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:24 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: [EXT]:Support Letter for LEAD-K

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Wade, Trent - Faculty <trentwade@delta.edu> <trentwade@delta.edu>
Date: Mon, Mar 7, 2022 at 6:48 PM
Subject: Re: [EXT]:Support Letter for LEAD-K
To: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>

Hello Freida,

Enclosed is my email to Representative Frederick.

Hello Representative Mr. Fredrick,

My name is Trent Wade. I am an associate professor of American Sign Language at Delta College in University Center. I have a master's degree in Special Education with emphasis in Deaf Education from University of Tennessee. For seven years, I was a teacher for the Deaf in settings from elementary to high school. Also, I served as a teaching consultant for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Incidentally, I happen to be profoundly deaf as I have been since my birth. I am a strong believer in bilingual approach in education in which I benefited from in my scholastic years. Crucially important is the access to communication and education for Deaf children which is facilitated using American Sign Language. Numerous studies have shown again and again on the impact of exposing Deaf children to language, which is ideally American Sign Language. ASL is a visual and spatial language with its grammar and syntax that helps provide foundation for language development, leading to mastery of English as a second language.

Therefore, I would like to convey my strong endorsement of the proposed bill titled LEAD-K HB5777 and I encourage you to please advocate for the passage of the bill. This passage will have a significant impact on Deaf children, empowering them and their respective parents in ensuring an access and exposure to language, specifically American Sign Language. This will assist in their learning and lead to a reduction to an inequity among Deaf children in language development.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Trent Wade

From: Wade, Trent - Faculty <trentwade@delta.edu> <trentwade@delta.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 3:56 PM

To: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: [EXT]:Support Letter for LEAD-K

Hello Freida,

I would be happy to lend my support and also I will ask my students to do the same. 😊

Thank you for including us in this important cause!

Trent

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 3:33 PM

To: Wade, Trent - Faculty <trentwade@delta.edu> <trentwade@delta.edu>

Subject: [EXT]:Support Letter for LEAD-K

****External Email****

Dear Mr. Wade,

Would you and the students write the support letter of LEAD-K HB5777? It is very important to have the legislators know Deaf Community does support this bill. It is **due on March 7, 2022**. The hearing will be on March 8, 2022.

When you send the support letter to Rep Frederick (BenFrederick@house.mi.gov), be sure to send me the copy of the letter.

And ask the students to make phone calls and send the letter, too.

If you have any questions, contact me.

Thank you,
Freida Morrison
Spokesperson
LEAD-K

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 2:54 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: HB 5777

Freida

Begin forwarded message:

From: Elizabeth Makowski <makohomb@gmail.com>
Date: March 14, 2022 at 2:51:17 PM EDT
To: Rodney Wakeman <RodneyWakeman@house.mi.gov>
Subject: HB 5777

March 14, 2022
Elizabeth Makowski
31511 Meadows Ave.
Madison Heights, MI 48071

Dear Rep Wakeman, Chair

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

Deaf and hard of hearing children are at a high risk of limited language access causing language deprivation which will follow them throughout life. LEAD-K supports young children who are deaf and hard of hearing to have a strong language foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. This bill also provides a parent resource.

I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Makowski
Makohomb@gmail.com
248-556-3140

Joy Brewer

From: Michaela Jitaru <mjitaru2012@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 3:27 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Cc: Rep. Rodney Wakeman (District 94)
Subject: LEAD-K BILL #5777

Joy Brewer,

My name is Michaela and I'm Deaf lives in the Metro-Detroit area. This email to inform you is that I fully support LEAD-K Bill #5557 and please support this bill as well. We the Deaf community wants those Deaf children to have equal access to the school system. American Sign Language is the most top rich language and having a bilingual-ASL and English is important. Please support this bill.

Thank you
Michaela

Joy Brewer

From: smtpauth.mailwowway.com <stevekristal@wowway.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 4:28 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: I support the LEAD-K Bill

Just a quick note to let you know that I am in support of the LEAD-K Bill.

Dr. Steve Kristal
1807 Cedar Hill Dr.,
Royal Oak, MI
48067

Joy Brewer

From: Freida Morrison <fmorrisonasl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 4:00 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Fwd: Support the LEAD-K - HB 5777

Freida

Begin forwarded message:

From: Derrick DeMeritt <derrickd@combustionresearch.com>
Date: March 14, 2022 at 3:56:29 PM EDT
To: RodneyWakeman@house.mi.gov
Cc: LukeMeerman@house.mi.gov, LauriePohutsky@house.mi.gov, DaireRendon@house.mi.gov, JohnRoth@house.mi.gov, MarkTisdell@house.mi.gov, DarrinCamilleri@house.mi.gov, BrendaCarter@house.mi.gov, AbrahamAiyash@house.mi.gov, fmorrisonasl@gmail.com
Subject: Support the LEAD-K - HB 5777

3/14/2022
Derrick DeMeritt
686 Leyland Ct
Lake Orion, MI 48362

Dear Rep Wakeman, Chair,

I support the LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids) bill that is being sponsored by Representative Ben Frederick (HB 5777).

Education in the State of Michigan needs to improve for our deaf and hard-of-hearing students. LEAD-K (HB 5777) has the potential to do this, LEAD-K is a national campaign for legislative initiative in the United States. Seventeen 17 states have already passed this law. We need Michigan to do the same.

Deaf and hard of hearing children are at a high risk of limited language access causing language deprivation which will follow them throughout life. LEAD-K supports young children who are deaf and hard of hearing to have a strong language foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. This bill also provides a parent resource.

I am asking you to strongly consider sponsoring this bill.

Sincerely,

Derrick DeMeritt
Controller/CFO
Combustion Research Corporation
Phone (248) 852-3611
Fax (248) 852-9165

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Joy Brewer

From: Michelle Osterhout <elle@osterhout.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 4:52 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Cc: Morrison Freida
Subject: Please support House Bill 5777

Dear Clerk Joy Brewer and members,

I am writing on behalf of my support of Deaf Education for Deaf/HH kids.

Having had firsthand exposure to ASL, American Sign Language, I have had the luxury that most Deaf/HH kids do not have —access to language. Few families take the time to figure what works best for a Deaf child's needs.

Access to ASL has allowed me to soar through schooling years and to get a degree from college in Rochester, NY, at RIT. My parents are Deaf and my brother. We conversed ASL at home.

My mother taught my brother and I how to read and write in English. How to sign ASL and how to soar with reading books that took us on many adventures. My upbringing at home with ASL first, and English second has enabled me to be a successful and independent Deaf person today.

I'm a proud Deaf mother of Deaf heart codas whose first language was ASL along with English. Why are Deaf children deprived of their native ASL that many hearing kids easily have access to? Please pass House Bill 5777. It is time to change the tide and listen to the Deaf experts as well as the experts who are highly qualified to support our endeavor for ASL first....

Look at CODA movie, the Deaf actor Troy Kotsur....his native language is ASL. Look how far he has come? I've had the privilege of knowing him personally in college years and am in awe of his ASL talents. These Deaf children need to believe in themselves rather than be told what is best for them. They need to dream dreams as big as they can—to be the president one day or be an astronaut. To be a successful lawyer or a famous movie star.

It is time to change the tide—again, support House Bill 5777

Sincerely yours,
Michelle Osterhout
Deaf
ASL teacher
Manager Operations for EWO

~elle Sent from my iPhone

Joy Brewer

From: Jaclyn Lewinski <jaclynlewinskiphd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 5:00 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Lead K Bill SUPPORT

Sending my support for the lead K bill which will directly and positively impact my niece and children like her.

Thank you
Dr Jaclyn Lewinski

--

Jaclyn Lewinski, PhD, LPC-MHSP
3011 Poston Ave
Nashville, TN 37203
ph: 629-777-6007

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Joy Brewer

From: Jennifer Kolhoff <jkolhoff@nvps.net>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 5:11 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Support of HB 5777

Good afternoon,

On Tuesday, March 15, 2022 there is scheduled to be a committee hearing for HB 5777 in room 519 of the Anderson House Office Building. I am unable to attend in person but would like to voice my support of this bill. Here is my information. Thank you so much for your time.

Jennifer Kolhoff
1044 12th Street
Martin, MI 49070
269-377-4093
jkolhoff@nvps.net

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Jennifer Kolhoff
(she/her/hers)
ASL/English Interpreter
Northview Public Schools
jkolhoff@nvps.net

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Joy Brewer

From: Aly Collesano <alycollesano@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 7:46 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K Bill

Hello!

I'm writing in support of the LEAD-K bill, HB5777, being discussed at today's hearing.

I have degrees in early childhood development and elementary education. As part of my training to obtain those degrees, we're taught about the formative years for children and how the earlier they are able to be exposed to things like language, the better able they are to gain that skill. I'm so confused as to why something like this bill doesn't already exist for children that are deaf or hard of hearing based on the principle that early exposure to language is key. When we don't offer the proper resources when they are most influential, we are depriving these kids of a basic need: communication. Technology is an incredible tool, but it's not the only tool and, as we learned last week from Mary Mitchell's testimony, it won't always work for everyone.

Mary is my sister, my nephew is Gabe. He is a typical teenaged boy and he's deaf. Cochlear implants won't work for him. So essentially the only resource that the state of Michigan has made available to my nephew is a non-starter. Like Mary said last week, because of a chance meeting at church one Sunday morning, my family has been able to surround Gabe with language to the best of our ability as we were learning right along with him. It's only because of that chance meeting that Gabe was able to be introduced to his language, ASL. He is so very fortunate. Other kids that aren't as lucky as Gabe aren't set up for success in life because we aren't giving them the basic tool they need to be successful: communication. Think of how that affects their self esteem, their confidence in how they face the world, and quite honestly, how they contribute to society.

By not giving people resources early on, we are limiting them and their potential. We are saying they are less than someone who hears. To me, that is unacceptable. Let's equip and encourage people, families, to do what's best for them, not what others decide is okay enough.

Thank you for your time. Please pass HB5777!

Aly Collesano
9th District

Joy Brewer

From: Lindsay Barno <lindsay.barno@detroitk12.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 7:51 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5777

Hello Joy Brewer,

I am emailing you in support towards House Bill 5777. Any bill that supports Deaf education and the education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children is astronomically important. It is already 2022 and Michigan still does not put the education of these children in their minds when developing curriculum guidelines for them. Michigan has not established exact guidelines for parents to utilize when they discover that their children have hearing loss. It is IMPERATIVE that these children have 100% access to language and one way to provide that is through American sign language.

As a deaf school social worker who navigated this system myself, I was fortunate that I had a brilliant elementary teacher who helped me build the foundation of language. I was fortunate enough that I had parents who advocated for my education prior to the age of 5. They had me learn sign language and I was able to excel. However, more than 50% of deaf children who I come across are lacking that foundational language knowledge. They spend their entire lives stuck on 1-2 grade reading levels, writing levels, etc.. It is because there is nothing set in place when it comes to the education of Deaf and Hard of hearing children. It angers me knowing that this is entirely preventable. That these children are more than capable of learning. Yet they were robbed of those precious first five years of life developing language because there was nothing in place that would've gave them that.

support HB577!

Lindsay Barno, LLMSW
School Social Worker for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Detroit Public Schools Community District
School Social Work
Frederick Douglass
2001 W. Warren Ave.
Detroit Michigan 48208

detroitk12.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)



Joy Brewer

From: Emily Buccaneer <ebuccaneer@mcc.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 8:52 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: SUPPORT HB 5777

Greetings Clerk Brewer,

This email is in support of house bill 5777 (Education: curriculum; resource for use by a parent or legal guardian of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing; require that the department develop. Amends 1976 PA 451 (MCL 380.1 - 380.1852) by adding sec. 1705.)

We are in an age of information. There is mounted research on the importance of language acquisition and the best age window (birth to five) at which to acquire it. Now we need action! We need support systems put into place for hearing parents who want the best for their Deaf and HoH kids, but are being fed conflicting information and don't know how to get started. We need to break the lag time between newborn hearing screen diagnosis and introduction to Deaf and HoH adults (who else could better explain what Deaf kids need than former Deaf kids hey!)

Our daughter is Deaf. We reached out in every direction trying to navigate the best way to support her happy, healthy childhood. Early On was ill-equipped to help us. The place we lived had few resources. Our family moved to connect into the Deaf Community in Genesee County, and our daughter now attends Michigan School for the Deaf. She is bilingual and thriving, but our story is a lucky one. Too many parents struggle and can't find what they need, or don't have the ability to relocate. Support legislation to empower the next generation of Deaf/HoH kids. Support HB 5777.

Thank you for your time.
Emily Buccaneer

Joy Brewer

From: Emiri, Dhurata <dxemiri@oaklandcc.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 9:17 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K Bill

LEAD-K Bill (Language Equality & Acquisition for Deaf Kids).

A main goal of this legislation is to create resources for parents to monitor expressive and receptive language acquisition by deaf and hard of hearing children from 0-5 years of age. Additionally, it helps children acquire language skills in both ASL (American Sign Language) and English, so as to improve their reading & writing proficiency in the long term.

I hope you support the kids to have access to language during the most critical early years to have the foundation for a lifetime.

Please take a moment and consider passing this Bill

Sincerely
Dhurata Emiri

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Joy Brewer

From: Jennifer Wickman <jawickman7@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 10:01 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: I SUPPORT HB5777

To Families, Children and Seniors Committee,

I am a Deaf Education teacher in Genesee County. I teach students with varying degrees of hearing loss. Some of my students are hard of hearing while other are profoundly deaf. The largest issue I deal with within my classroom is trying to teach content to those students who are language deprived.

Often, students come to our school after experiencing failure in other oral programs. These students will come to us as late as 9-- 10- grade. By this time, they have gone 15+ years with no mastery of language. This is of no fault of their own but due to the fact that their parent(s) did not have the resources to make a sound decision on what should be the language of instruction to their child. At this age, the student will almost always have language deprivation for the rest of his/her life.

Unfortunately these children are a product of a failed Michigan Deaf education system. For these reasons, I STRONGLY support HB 5777. Language needs to be acquired during the critical years (birth – age 5) for language development.

If you care about language deprivation, equality for all and parental CHOICE, I ask you to vote for and support HB 5777.

Thank you,
Jennifer Wickman
jawickman7@gmail.com
818-435-8125

Joy Brewer

From: Moises Cortez <moises.cortez95@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 10:11 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: I SUPPORT HB577

To Families, Children and Seniors Committee,

I am a Deaf Education teacher in Genesee County. I teach students with varying degrees of hearing loss. Some of my students are hard of hearing while other are profoundly deaf. The largest issue I deal with within my classroom is trying to teach content to those students who are language deprived.

Often, students come to our school after experiencing failure in other oral programs. These students will come to us as late as 9th – 10th grade. By this time, they have gone 15+ years with no mastery of language. This is of no fault of their own but due to the fact that their parent(s) did not have the resources to make a sound decision on what should be the language of instruction to their child. At this age, the student will almost always have language deprivation for the rest of his/her life.

Unfortunately these children are a product of a failed Michigan Deaf education system. For these reasons, I STRONGLY support HB 5777. Language needs to be acquired during the critical years (birth – age 5) for language development.

If you care about language deprivation, equality for all and parental CHOICE, I ask you to vote for and support HB 5777.

Moises Cortez
[Moises.cortez95@gmail.com](mailto:moises.cortez95@gmail.com)
619-576-5277

Joy Brewer

From: Zimny, Erin <EZIMNY1@hfhs.org>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022 11:56 PM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: LEAD-K

Dear Michigan House,

My daughter, Elizabeth, is almost 4 years old. She was born with moderate hearing loss. She wears hearing aids. With them on, she can hear about 30% of a group discussion in the school classroom. That's it, 30%.

She has worked Really hard at speech therapy to learn to talk. We've been told that she can hear "good enough to get by." Elizabeth is not one to just get by. My daughter is smart and determined. She flourishes. We've fought for her to have access to American Sign Language as part of her education. She can access ASL 100% percent of the time, not just the 30% of spoken English her hearing aids provide. It seems negligent to deny her access to a language that fits her natural abilities and a language that she can thrive at.

Interestingly, no specialist or educator has ever suggested that we deny her access to English.

Please, you must consider voting in support of LEAD-K. This bill gives my daughter and her peers access to language-whatever language is best for each child's specific situation. All language is good language. All language exposure in the early childhood years stimulates the brain and lays the foundation for success down the road.

Please do your part to support these amazing Deaf and hard of hearing kids grow to their full potential by voting YES for LEAD-K.

Best,
Erin Zimny-Lewinski

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Joy Brewer

From: Pam Groth <pam.groth@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 6:46 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: HB 5777

I am emailing you to please support this bill HB 5777. This bill is crucial for Lead-K.

Thanks,
Pam Groth

Joy Brewer

From: Arizona Welsh <numbersgirl66@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 7:37 AM
To: Joy Brewer
Subject: Comment in favor of LEAD-K Bill (HB5777)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Arizona Welsh. I was born and raised in Michigan, mainly in the Metro Detroit area from ages 16 months to adulthood. I am now living in Virginia, but I felt the need to speak up about this important bill.

I was born deaf with low vision in 1966 due to the Rubella epidemic. I attended schools and programs for the deaf, all oral. However, I was severely language-deprived until I was 4 1/2 years old. Even though I did extremely well in school, being the overachiever and perfectionist even at four, I still had to work hard to catch up for several years, managing to graduate from high school at 18 with a full 12th grade education.

Looking back, I wish my parents hadn't been lied to about the claim by medical professionals that the use of sign language first would prevent me from learning to speak properly and appear normal like all the hearing people. Really, what's "normal", anyway???

Had I learned ASL to begin with, I might have been able to better understand the world around me before I was three and possibly been ready for kindergarten before age five. You see, I learned to read on my own by age three, so I feel I could have possibly skipped a grade or two in school, had I not been language-deprived.

I have been to school with several of my Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing friends. Many of them are oral failures. They all cannot read above third or fourth grade level; their English skills are mediocre. I strongly believe that had they learned ASL from birth up to entering kindergarten, they would have had better success in school, mastering English along with ASL. I know I would have.

Please do not listen to those opposing this bill; they don't know what they are talking about. We in the Deaf community do and know what's best for our younger Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing children.

Please pass the LEAD-K Bill.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Ms. Arizona Welsh

Joy Brewer

From: Stevie Naeyaert <stevienaeyaert@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 7:42 AM
To: Joy Brewer; Freida Morrison
Subject: Support for HB5777

Good morning Joy Brewer

First off - apologies for the brevity and typos. I'm typing this on my phone with my thumbs. I do not have access to a computer at the moment.

This is my letter of support for HB5777.

As a member of the deaf community - being deaf myself, with deaf parents, and a deaf child - I have seen firsthand the devastation of language deprivation of deaf children and the lifelong impact as they grow into adulthood.

Hearing aids or any listening devices are tools, not language. Being able to hear some sounds does not mean language access is there. Sign language is the most natural and easily accessible language for all deaf children. Once language foundation is present - then other tools, such as hearing devices or speech training, may benefit the child. But without a strong language foundation - in the format that is most natural to them - the child/adult will struggle for the rest of their lives.

This bill will keep track of all deaf/hard of hearing children language milestones and to flag children who aren't meeting milestones for additional language acquisition support.

For the well being of all children in Michigan - please pass HB5777. All the other individuals in opposition of this bill are doing so mainly for financial reasons. A damaged deaf adult is a huge money maker.

Thank you,
Stephanie Jo Naeyaert
Swartz Creek, Michigan
Genesee County

Joy Brewer

From: Natasha Abner <nabner@umich.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 9:27 AM
To: Joy Brewer; Rep. Rodney Wakeman (District 94); Rep. Luke Meerman (District 88); Rep. Laurie Pohutsky (District 19); Rep. John R. Roth (District 104); Rep. Daire Rendon (District 103); Rep. Mark Tisdell (District 45); Rep. Darrin Camilleri (District 23); Rep. Brenda Carter (District 29); Rep. Abraham Aiyash (District 4); Rep. Ben Frederick (District 85)
Subject: Additional comments on HB 5777

Dear Representatives,

I sent you a letter of support for HB5777 on Monday and I have now had an opportunity to watch some of the committee proceedings yesterday.

I have a PhD in Linguistics, serve as a faculty member at the University of Michigan, and have spent almost 20 years working in disability services. I would like to respond to the harmful lies told at the end of yesterday's meeting.

Providing a child with access to sign language does not in any way negatively impact their English outcomes. Indeed, research shows that early access to sign language *improves* deaf and hard-of-hearing children's literacy attainment. The presenter's comments about deaf and hard-of-hearing children's reading levels at graduation are, on the whole, correct.

However, those literacy outcomes are because in our present world, deaf and hard-of-hearing children do experience language delays and language deprivation. Their reading outcomes are *because* we do not have initiatives like HB 5777 in place. Their reading outcomes are *because* we force them into speech-only models instead of rich bilingual environments that allow them natural language experience without delay.

if you are moved by the observation that our deaf and hard-of-hearing children are graduating with 4th grade reading levels, that is all the more reason to pass this legislation.

Thank you,
Natasha

--

Natasha Abner (*she/her/hers*)

Living and working on Anishinaabe land.

Website

Assistant Professor, Linguistics Department

PI, Sign Language & Multi-Modal Communication Lab

Board of Directors, Camp Looking Glass

450 Lorch

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1220

Joy Brewer

From: Kristin Burgard <kristinb500@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2022 12:30 PM
To: Joy Brewer; Rep. Rodney Wakeman (District 94); Rep. Luke Meerman (District 88); Rep. Laurie Pohutsky (District 19); Rep. John R. Roth (District 104); Rep. Daire Rendon (District 103); Rep. Mark Tisdell (District 45); Rep. Darrin Camilleri (District 23); Rep. Brenda Carter (District 29); Rep. Abraham Aiyash (District 4)
Subject: HB5777

Hello,

I am writing to you today to issue my unwavering and enthusiastic support of House Bill 5777. It is vitally important that we usher this bill forward through the legislative process and begin the work of building a better future for our deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The resources and policies mandated in HB5777 will improve the educational services available for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and finally begin to correct the disabling communicative barriers and expectations we have long foisted on them. As is so often the case when we begin to address and undo histories of oppression, the power of this bill comes from its grounding in equity.

By all linguistic measures, there is equity between signed and spoken language. Though our language leaves no traces in the fossil record, there is reason to believe that sign languages have co-existed alongside spoken languages for all of human history. Moreover, nearly a century of research has now confirmed that the linguistic structures of signed languages and spoken languages are similar, as are the neural processes of language production and perception. Infants raised in signing homes exhibit the same pace and pathway of language acquisition that is found in spoken language development – even babbling to themselves in the crib while they look at their hands. Indeed, the hands and eyes are so well-suited to the task of linguistic communication that isolated deaf children innovate their own language-like systems in order to perform one of the most fundamental of human activities, talking to people. Thus, our biological capacity for language does not preference or privilege one mode of language over another, so long as the language is accessible. It is in this respect that a vast chasm exists between the choice of signed or spoken language for a child with a moderate to profound hearing impairment. Whereas a hearing child will find equally accessible either signed or spoken language (many hearing children of deaf adults grow up bilingual in a sign language), a deaf child has no natural access to auditory language. Sign language, however, is accessible to deaf children.

Thus, early interventions that provide exposure and access to sign language are the only way to guarantee typical language exposure, experience, and development for deaf children. By all outcome and well-being measures, providing sign language access benefits deaf children. All spoken language and hearing interventions run the risk of failure, and to fail in this domain is to deprive a child of a basic human need, language. Early language deprivation has severe and acute, lasting consequences for a child's educational and psycho-social development. Ramifications range from increased rates of depression to increased susceptibility to abuse. In school, deaf children deprived of early sign language can experience linguistic impairments that isolate them from peers and teachers, and research tells us that such linguistic isolation leads to and compounds other academic, social and developmental problems. Unsurprisingly, failing to meet the language needs of deaf children leads to their decreased socio-economic attainment as adults. Unfortunately, these detrimental outcomes have been the reality for most deaf and hard-of-hearing children for generations. Due to discriminatory and ableist views about signed versus spoken languages, deaf children have been forced to conform to hearing and speaking norms and they have suffered for it. In addition to innumerable social and psychological benefits, which include improved relationship with caregivers, early access to sign language is also the best way to guarantee speaking and literacy development in deaf children. In the US, research has shown that early access to sign language helps children develop speaking and literacy skills, and that deaf children learning sign and speech in bimodal-bilingual environments outperform deaf children who are being exposed to speech alone. Acquiring a sign language does not inhibit the development of a spoken language; instead, controlling for other factors, English language

attainment is higher for deaf children with better American Sign Language skills. In sum, on the matter of language choice, the scientific evidence is clear: sign languages are languages and the best possible outcomes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children occur when sign language access is provided. HB5777 creates mechanisms and resources for providing improved language access to deaf children and their families in Michigan. In doing so, this legislation complies with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which calls for the recognition and promotion of sign languages. Moreover, HB5777 paves the way for overall improved language and English literacy development for deaf children and, in doing so, respects the right to bilingualism mandated by both the National Federation of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deaf. Thus, though targeted at our educational system, HB5777 is fundamentally a piece of civil and human rights legislation. In this case, however, the arc of the moral universe does not bend toward justice by hearing calls or amplifying voices of the oppressed because the very source of oppression is the harm caused by normative pressures to speak and hear. Rather, with HB5777, we have the chance to finally open our eyes and remove the handcuffs that have needlessly burdened and failed generations of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. In the interest of children across the state of Michigan, we must pass this legislation.

Sincerely,
Kristin Burgard

--

My new email address is kristinb500@gmail.com