

Good Afternoon,

My name is Laura White. I once was full sighted with a moderate hearing loss. I had a full time job, as a teacher, driving and could understand speech, and read all kinds of materials. Thirty years ago, I was told that I was going to go Blind in time, due to Retinitis Pigmentosa with Usher syndrome. This disease is a gradual degeneration of vision and hearing. Today I am legally blind and deaf. My vision is always blurry, sensitive to lights, lack of details in identifying objects and faces. My right ear is deaf and my left is below range for speech. Currently I wear two hearing aids.

Living with this dual sensory loss has created many obstacles in staying independent. It has cause depression as well as isolation in my life.

Today, I would not be here if it wasn't for the service of a Support Service Provider, SSP, which is part of the Communication Access Services in this Bill.

Vision and Hearing are senses that give people the information of their environment and actions of individuals. Deafblind individuals cannot receive this information to respond or participate. However, with the assistance of a provider or SSP to give us that information.

The Communication Access Service would help me to receive information and be involved just like those who have the privilege.

With this service being developed and provided it would open a new door to independence for me as well as others. It would mean being able to do and enjoy the norm of what others without the sensory loss enjoy. I love being with people and I really would like to get out to do the things I love. I miss being involved with the community, friends and family.

Thank you,

Laura White, Fairway, Kansas