

February 24, 2022

To: Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee

Re: SB 155

I am writing you today to share with you how newborn hearing screening impacted my family and is vital to the development of children who are diagnosed deaf/hard of hearing. Please support SB 155.

In 2002 our daughter was diagnosed with a congenital bilateral sensorineural moderate to severe hearing loss in the first few months of life. Obviously, this was not on our radar as we awaited our baby girl. We wouldn't have been aware she had a hearing loss so early without newborn screening. In fact, we may have not known until the window to learn language skills had closed which sadly happens all too often. The first couple years are vitally important to acquire the skills for language acquisition. Thankfully by the grace of God, today she is a sophomore in college managing her hearing loss beautifully.

We are grateful for newborn screening in the hospital and subsequent follow ups. Newborn screening alerted us to a situation we were able to manage by providing our daughter with the technology she needs to develop and learn language skills. She was fitted with her first pair of hearing aids at 4 months. Without newborn screening and early intervention, I can't even imagine the consequences of her ability to learn, and the costs associated with additional special needs/education. The health costs may have been insurmountable without newborn screening as this condition is a huge financial commitment. The lifetime costs associated with hearing loss alone are a major financial commitment since insurance coverage isn't mandated to pay for hearing aids for children in Kansas. Maybe you could think about correcting this wrong as well.

Again, please support SB155 and increase funding for newborn screening for our children.

Sincerely,

Terri Steinlage
Mother of child who is DHH