

Municipal Clerk's Office

Approved
Date: April 8, 2025

Submitted by: Assembly Member Volland
and Assembly Vice-Chair
Zaletel

Prepared by: Legislative Services Office
Reviewed by: Assembly Counsel
For reading: April 8, 2025

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2025-104

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY EXPRESSING ITS
SUPPORT FOR ALASKA SENATE BILL 8: EDUCATION FOR DEAF AND HARD
OF HEARING STUDENTS.**

WHEREAS, Alaska Senate Bill 8, sponsored by Senator Gray-Jackson, is titled “An Act relating to public school students who are deaf or hard of hearing”; and

WHEREAS, the bill aims to enhance educational opportunities and resources for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in Alaska's public schools; and

WHEREAS, providing appropriate educational, communications, and language support to these students is essential for their academic success and personal development; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary tools and training to effectively teach and communicate with students who are deaf or hard of hearing meeting their language needs promotes an inclusive learning environment; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this bill would align Alaska’s educational standards with best practices for supporting students with hearing loss or whom are born deaf; and

WHEREAS, every student has the right to an equitable, high-quality education that meets their individual needs; and

WHEREAS, deaf and hard-of-hearing students require specialized services, accommodations, and resources to access education on an equal footing with their peers, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, speech-language support, assistive technology, and trained educators and paraprofessionals; and

WHEREAS, early access to language and communication is critical to the academic, social, and emotional development of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and the Anchorage Assembly recognizes the importance of equal access to quality education for all students, regardless of their hearing abilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:

Section 1. The Anchorage Assembly fully supports the passage and implementation of Alaska Senate Bill 8 and urges the Alaska State Legislature to prioritize this bill to ensure that students who are deaf or hard of hearing receive the

educational, communications, and language support they need.

Section 3. A copy of this resolution will be sent to Senator Gray-Jackson, members of the Senate Education Committee, and other relevant stakeholders to express our support for this legislation.

Section 3. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 8th day of April, 2025.

ATTEST:



Chair



Municipal Clerk

Attachment: Sponsor Statement for Senate Bill 8

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON
SENATE DISTRICT G

Sponsor Statement: Senate Bill 8 Education for Deaf and Hearing Impaired

Senate Bill 8 is a critical step forward in creating a more welcoming educational environment in Alaska for students who experience issues from being deaf or hard of hearing by enhancing safeguards, providing access to comprehensive information, and establishing tailored educational services. This robust bill empowers families to make informed decisions about their child's education.

SB 8 mandates that school districts provide parents with neutral, unbiased, and thorough information about hearing technologies, various communication methods and relevant programs that are tailored for the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as public and private entities with expertise in this area.

With this information from the school, parents are given the autonomy to select the communication method that best suits their child. Then the school districts are required to ensure that services are delivered by professionals with expertise in their chosen method. To enhance access to specialized resources, SB 8 directs the Department of Education to establish and operate a centralized program for deaf students, including residential services. School districts retain responsibility for special education and collaborate with the program to support students.

This bill is important for all of Alaska because children who are deaf or hard of hearing deserve the same opportunities for academic success as their peers. When we fail to provide these opportunities, we put these vulnerable citizens without secure means to provide for themselves. This bill also recognizes the diversity within the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and respects the preferences of families in shaping their child's educational journey.

SB 8 reflects our commitment to fostering a supportive and accessible learning environment for all students. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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