



ALL ALASKA
PEDIATRIC
PARTNERSHIP

March 16, 2023

Representative Jamie Allard
State Capitol Building, Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 111 – An Act Relating to Public School Students Who are Deaf or Have a Hearing Impairment

Representative Allard,

I am writing on behalf of the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership (A2P2) to express our support for House Bill 111- An Act Relating to Public School Students Who are Deaf or Have a Hearing Impairment. A2P2 works closely with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education to support children and families throughout the state of Alaska. We also participate regularly in the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Advisory Group, which supports efforts around early detection of hearing loss in Alaska's youngest children.

Our program, Help Me Grow Alaska (HMG-AK), connects families and children to resources and services they need as close to home as possible. Families throughout the state of Alaska call us when they need additional support navigating referrals, connecting to services and educational resources. We also support service and medical providers who reach out to our program in search of information on resources for their patients, including inquiries into services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

One of the guiding principles of A2P2 and HMG-AK is that children and families benefit most when diagnosed and supported with services as early as possible in the child's life. Early intervention and identification of needed supports greatly increase the chances that all children will thrive and grow to their greatest potential.

We strongly support the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education in their assertion that deaf and hard of hearing children are born with the same ability to acquire language as any other children and deserve the same opportunities to do so. They have the capacity to be educated, graduate high school, obtain further education, and to pursue a career.

To that end, all families of deaf or hard of hearing children should have access to appropriate early intervention and family educational services, comprehensive



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information, and access to state resources to help their deaf children reach their full potential. This includes access to, and assessment by, qualified professionals proficient in developing the child's acquisition of language throughout their early intervention and school years.

A2P2 strongly supports the passage of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights. Thank you for your support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Tamar Ben-Yosef