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**Testimony re: HB 2285
House Health and Human Services Committee
Presented by Ronald R. Hein
on behalf of
Kansas Hearing Aid Association
February 17, 2005**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Julie Hein, and I am representing the Kansas Hearing Aid Association (KHAA). KHAA is the professional association for licensed hearing aid fitters and dispensers in the state.

The KHAA supports HB 2285, which makes much needed technical and minor substantive changes in the hearing aid fitters and dispensers licensure act. This act has not been updated in numerous years, and the changes set out in the bill, though primarily technical, are badly needed. These changes are necessary for clarity, and, more importantly, for legal consistency and enforceability when the Attorney General must take action against a licensee.

Whenever licensure acts are "opened" there is always a possibility that amendments might be proposed to deal with other issues. We hope that will not occur here because of the amount of time and effort that went into preparing this legislation.

However, with that said, Ron Hein was given a copy of a proposed amendment on Tuesday which may be presented to this committee by the Kansas Speech, Language and Hearing Association (KSHA) which would provide that Licensed Audiologists are not required to pass an examination in order to be licensed by the Board of Examiners of Hearing Aid Dispensers.

The KHAA would oppose this amendment on this legislation. The board has offered to meet with KSHA to discuss this issue over the summer. However, to take action at this time would be inappropriate for a number of reasons, including the potential harm to the public this amendment might cause to occur, and the fact that HB 2285 is a simple bill which makes technical clean-up amendments in the statutes.

The KHAA is willing to meet with KSHA over the summer to address the issue, but the KSHA proposed amendment should be rejected at this time. If the committee desires to deal with this major policy issue, we would request that the Chairman schedule another committee hearing to address the substantive arguments for and against this major policy provision.

The KHAA supports this legislation as long as it is not amended in any substantive way.

Thank you very much for permitting me to testify, and I will be happy to yield to questions.