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KRISTEN O'SHEA
STATE OF KANSAS
SENATOR

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

I testify in favor of Senate Bill 343 as amended: Updating the term "hearing impaired" to "hard of hearing" in statutes related to persons with hearing loss.

Sarah Hale, my constituent, came to me a year ago with the hopes to change the law to the correct term "deaf" or "hard of hearing" instead of "hearing impaired." We discussed other states who had made this change and agreed that policy change was a good step in the right direction, but only one piece of the puzzle. A large part of this challenge with language will also require educating the public. You can see below in my testimony some of the educational graphics we intend to use and share with other legislatures around the state.

We also wanted to ensure by changing the language there weren't unintentional medical ramifications and so we've worked with the Kansas Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Revisors to ensure these language changes don't cause issues with the original intentions of the bill.

Finally, since introducing this bill we included another stakeholder in the conversation, Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association and they brought helpful amendments. I am thankful for my opportunity to work with some of the individuals in our Kansas deaf community and commend their work. I respectfully ask that this committee pass SB 343 favorably.

Kristen O'Shea
Senator District 18
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REASON #7

Deaf people resent
being defined in terms of
malfunctioning auditory machinery.

www.wtdp.org/deafyes



WE THE DEAF PEOPLE
CAMPAIGN

REASON #3

"Deaf" does not exclude a sense of pride and identify as members of a linguistic-minority community.

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WE THE DEAF PEOPLE
CAMPAIGN

REASON #6

"Hearing-impaired" is negative labeling, judgemental, and annoyingly vague.

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WE THE DEAF PEOPLE
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REASON #5

"Deaf" encompasses language, communication, arts, social relationships, and culture.

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REASON #1

"Deaf" is a simple, neutral, nonjudgemental term denoting people who use their eyes to communicate via sign language and other visually-based means (such as text and open captions).

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REASON #2

"Hearing-impaired" is a supposedly, more "polite" term than "deaf." We find it *offensive*, as it defines us in terms of what we lack. It labels us as broken machinery.

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REASON #4

"Hearing-impaired" is used as a euphemism for "deaf."
We don't need euphemisms to deodorize our reality.

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WE THE DEAF PEOPLE
CAMPAIGN

REASON #9

We're not broken.
We're not impaired.

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REASON #8

"Hearing-impaired" is not an accurate term. It's an **insult**.

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