Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

**House Bill 106 Title**: **Requires the department of elementary and secondary education to establish language developmental milestones for children who are deaf or hard of hearing**

I am writing to oppose *HB 106 LEAD-K Bill*. As a member of the Missouri Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA), I am very concerned that *HB 106* does not address the needs of children and families with whom I work.

Although *HB106* addresses an important goal—making sure all children who are deaf or hard of hearing acquire a solid language foundation and achieve grade-level literacy—it does not address the following:

· Children whose parents have chosen listening and spoken language for them.

· All communication options, such as listening and talking—the choice made for children.

· Updated language developmental milestones for children from birth to 12 years of age that have been

 identified as deaf or hard of hearing.

· Parental resource for monitoring and tracking children through the milestone stages.

More than 90% of babies born with hearing loss are born to hearing parents. When these parents are informed about all their options for language and communication, a large majority of them are choosing for their child to learn and use spoken English. In spite of deafness, advances in hearing technology and the provision of quality early intervention, allows these children to acquire language skills comparable to their hearing peers. Thus, the developmental language milestones expected of hearing children are the same for deaf children who listen and talk.

**Senate Bill 410 Title: Establishes the "Do No Harm Act" relating to diversity-equity-inclusion requirements**

Please oppose SB 410 which would prohibit public institutions of higher education offering health care-related degrees or certifications from requiring diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) ideologies or materials for applicants or students during the application process or education at the institution.

Over 4,500 Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists reside in Missouri. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) identify, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders.

MSHA and our national association, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), opposes SB 410 because it significantly limits the ability for audiology and speech-language pathology programs to appropriately educate and train students for a diverse population of clients, patients, and students. ASHA believes that representation matters, that culturally responsive care is a clinical imperative, and that quality service and optimal outcomes are best achieved by professionals who engage in self-reflection and address power imbalances inherent to (a) educational and health care systems and (b) relationships with clients, patients, students, and families. The restrictions placed by this bill lessen the value of these professional qualities and limits access for professionals assessing and treating communication disorders.

MSHA maintains the critical need for development of syllabi and instructional activities with infusion of multicultural/multilingual issues at higher education institutions to prepare professionals to work with individuals who have communication disorders. While ASHA’s Code of Ethics does not cover students, we know that graduating students need to be prepared to become certified members. It is the responsibility of higher education to prepare students for working with all populations, including aspects of bias, identity, language, and diversity.

**Thank you for all you do on behalf of the citizens of Missouri and especially your support of education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. I ask you, again, to please oppose**

***HB 106* AND *SB 410*.**

Respectfully,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City/ZIP in Missouri: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_