



REPRESENTATIVE CASEY WEINSTEIN
HOUSE DISTRICT 34

REPRESENTATIVE BOB YOUNG
HOUSE DISTRICT 32

House Insurance Committee
HB 152 Sponsor Testimony
May 3, 2023

Chairman Lampton, Vice Chairman Barhorst, Ranking Member Miranda, and Members of the House Insurance Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of House Bill 152, also known as Madeline's Law. This bill is a critical step forward in improving early childhood development and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to thrive and succeed for a lifetime.

Madeline's Law is specifically designed to address the issue of hearing loss in children, which is a disability that affects a small percentage of our population but can have a major impact on their ability to communicate and learn. Ohio already mandates hearing screenings for newborns, but by ensuring that children have access to early intervention services and hearing aids, this bill can help to mitigate the negative effects of hearing loss and promote positive outcomes for Ohio's youth.

As you know, the cost of providing these services and devices can be a major barrier for Ohio families—costing as much as \$6000 for a pair of hearing aids, not including fittings or visits to the audiologist. This is especially burdensome for those who may already be struggling financially. By investing in the early development of our children, we are helping to build a stronger and more prosperous Ohio for generations to come. I believe that the return on investment in this area is significant and can have a lasting impact on our state's future.

Madeline's Law was originally introduced in the 133rd GA and named for Madeline Rohlin, whose parents approached me and explained their struggles affording hearing aids for their young daughter due to lack of insurance coverage. It was reintroduced with bi-partisan support last general assembly and passed out of the House Health Committee with a vote of 15 to 2 before the GA ended. While these devices play a critical role in early intervention to support speech and language development, childhood hearing aids are still considered "cosmetic devices" by many insurance providers in Ohio.

Madeline's Law would require health benefit plans cover up to \$2500 per individual hearing aid every 48 months for enrolled Ohioans under the age of 22. The bill also includes required coverage for related services such as fittings and hearing exams. Passing HB 152 would add Ohio to the list of [25 other states](#) that already require insurance companies provide hearing aid coverage for children.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this important issue. We urge you to support House Bill 152 and its goal of supporting Ohio families and improving early childhood development for all Ohio children, and Rep Young and I are available to answer any questions that the committee may have.
