

Good morning Chairman Lampton, Vice-Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Miranda, and members of the Insurance Committee.

My name is Tess and I'm a sophomore at Hilliard Davidson High School. I've worn hearing aids since I was 22 months old. I've needed them in many aspects of my life. Much like putting on glasses or taking medication in the morning, they are a necessary part of my life. I use them as a tool to help me succeed and would not be where I am today without them.

I'm not the only one; many families in Ohio have to figure out how to pay for these devices for their children.

I have an older sister, Ellie, who is a sophomore in college. She is majoring in biomedical sciences and Spanish. She has worn hearing aids since she was 3 years old. College students like Ellie need access to hearing aids.

I have a younger brother, Toby, who is 13 and in 7th grade. He plays trumpet and wrestles. He has worn hearing aids since he was 6 weeks old. Middle schoolers like Toby need access to hearing aids.

My after-school job is at Goldfish Swim School, where I teach kids swim lessons and lifeguard. One of the students is a 6-year-old girl Sydney, who also wears hearing aids. She and I have bonded over our hearing aids and enjoy interacting every week. Kids like Sydney need access to hearing aids.

As for me, I use my hearing aids to connect with my French tutors online. Next year, when I am a high school Junior, I will be studying abroad through Rotary International in Belgium. I need access to hearing aids to do so much every day. These devices allow me to connect with my peers, learn in school, communicate with my coworkers throughout my shift, and understand the world around me. I use them to play the clarinet, listen to my teacher, to music or my podcasts, hold funny conversations, laugh at jokes, and more.

Without these, I would most likely struggle in school and in the community to understand others, like how someone without glasses can't see the board at the front of the room. Kids in Ohio need access to hearing aids through this legislation. Please support House Bill 152.