

**Lois Kuhns**

**Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 96**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**May 28, 2025**

Thank you Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Lois Kuhns, and I write to you not just as a citizen, but as a parent deeply concerned about the rights, needs, and opportunities of children and adults who are blind, low vision, DeafBlind, or deaf with low vision. I respectfully request the opportunity to testify before Congress on the urgent need to strengthen support systems that will empower these individuals to live independently and with dignity.

As a member of a family that includes DeafBlind individuals, including my own children, I carry deep awareness of the unique challenges they face. Too many DeafBlind and deaf low vision people struggle to access basic services, maintain their independence, and live fully integrated lives. Many are forced to rely heavily on limited vision while navigating a world without sound—leaving them vulnerable to isolation and mental health challenges, especially when Support Service Providers (SSPs) are unavailable.

Imagine for a moment if your access to sound were suddenly taken away. How would you respond? Would you accept a life of limited freedom and denied rights? Yet this is the reality for so many DeafBlind individuals. Why do we allow a gap in access to persist, when equality and independence are fundamental human rights?

I am seriously concerned about the future of my children and community. I do not want them to grow up in fear, knowing their state or country may not provide the support they need to thrive. That is why I am joining advocacy efforts and asking for the chance to testify before you—to speak for those whose voices are too often overlooked.

With your support, we can build a future where DeafBlind and deaf low vision individuals—both children and adults—are not left behind. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff, so that the voices of this underserved community can be heard and meaningfully included in the policies that shape their lives. Please support the funding for programs related to DeafBlind services and the SSP program.

Thank you for your service, and for considering this urgent request. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lois Kuhns