

Written Testimony presented by Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association to the House Committee on Health and Human Services

March 7, 2022

Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association, KSHA, is supportive of SB 343, regarding the updating of terminology for individuals with speech/language disorders and individuals with hearing loss.

KSHA is a professional organization made up of about 1000 speech-language pathologists and audiologists. We appreciate this opportunity to offer testimony regarding SB 343, aimed at replacing the term, “hearing impaired,” with “deaf and hard of hearing” or “individuals with hearing loss.” Sen. Kristen O’Shea worked with KSHA and other stakeholders to address additional statutory language and offered an amendment that also replaced the term, “speech and hearing conditions and diseases” with “speech, language, and hearing disorders.” The adoption of this amendment moved KSHA from a neutral position in the Senate, to a proponent before your committee today.

We fully support the changes that eliminate the term outdated term, “hearing impaired.” The World Federation of the Deaf has taken the stance that “hearing impaired” is no longer an acceptable term.

When discussing disabilities related to communication, the term “disorder” is preferred to “condition” or “disease.” These modernizations have also been made in SB 343.

Thank you for considering the passage of SB 343, showing that you value Kansans with communication disorders.

Sincerely,

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References cited:

Disability Language Style Guide, National Center on Disability and Journalism; <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>