



Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc.

P.O. Box 10085
Olathe, KS 66061

To: Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

From: Kim Anderson
President

Date: January 24, 2022

Subject: SB 343; Updating the term “hearing impaired” to “hard of hearing”

The Kansas Association of the Deaf (KAD) appreciates this opportunity to discuss the benefits of passing SB 343. The KAD would like to offer the following comments regarding SB 343.

Since 1909, the KAD has been working to protect, preserve, and promote the civil, human, and linguistic rights of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and DeafBlind individuals in Kansas. The KAD represents approximately 242,000 Kansans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals-- at least fifteen percent of the entire Kansas population.

It is the KAD's position that the term "hearing impaired" should not be used in referring to the Deaf community because it represents a tacit form of discrimination and erasure of the rich cultural and linguistic identity of Deaf people, their languages, cultures, and experiences. Following the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1992, the Kansas Legislature changed the name of the state agency from Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired to Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing while expanding the agency's duties and responsibilities.

The KAD is appreciative of the steps that are being taken to pass SB 343 into law. This new law will strengthen the role of the KAD and improve the quality of life for Kansas' Deaf and Hard of Hearing population.

Kim Anderson, President
Kansas Association of the Deaf