



October 20, 2022

Hon. Kathleen C. Hochul
Governor, State of New York
Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Re: S1852/A6710 Establishing a Commission for the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing.

Dear Governor Hochul,

As the executive director of Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), I write to urge you to sign S1852/A6710. This legislation will make New York the 39th state with a standing commission to inform policymaking, guide legislative actions and assure the delivery of programs and services for the estimated four million New York state residents who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing.

Within our hearing loss community, those with profound hearing loss earn less, receive fewer promotions, and have a higher rate of unemployment than their hearing peers. The World Health Organization calls hearing loss a major public health concern: it often goes untreated, whether because of stigma associated with hearing loss, the lack of Medicare and other health insurance coverage, or other factors.

At age 65, one in three people have measurable hearing loss. At age 75, one in every two have hearing loss. When untreated, seniors with hearing loss are more likely to withdraw from social engagement and become isolated. Studies also show a correlation between hearing loss and reduced cognitive ability and the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's.

The Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing in New York need a commission comprised of people with lived experience that can gather research, promote best practices in education and healthcare, provide expertise on the utilization of assistive technology, and much more, not another advisory committee.

HLAA urges you to sign into law S1852 and A6710: legislation that was unanimously passed by the Senate and Assembly earlier this year.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
/s/
Barbara Kelley
Executive Director

CC: Kim Hill, NYS Chief Disability Officer