**INSTRUCTIONS: Please personalize this letter and submit it online through the** [**Legislative Portal**](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/)**. Delete the red prompts (Note: You will need to create an account to submit this to the Assembly Appropriations Committee August 11, 2023. Then, please send a copy to** letcakidhear@gmail.com

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden

Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee

1021 O St., Suite 8820

Sacramento CA 95814

**RE: SB 635 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Holden,

As a parent of a child who is deaf and hard of hearing, I am writing to urge you to pass **SB 635** out of the Assembly Health Committee, which would require health plans to cover hearing aids for children who are deaf and hard of hearing in California.

In California, only 1 in 10 health plans cover hearing aids for children as they consider them elective. The cost of hearing aids is a significant financial burden for my family. Hearing aids cost up to $6,000 or more and must be replaced every three to four years. This legislation would significantly help my family and thousands of families across the state.

[INSERT: Tell them about your child and why this is important to your family]

In 2019, AB 598 (Bloom), The Let California Kids Hear Act, was unanimously passed by the legislature but later withdrawn due to the Newsom administration's request to implement an alternative program. After two years, with $32.8M (one-third that went to administration), only 225 of the 7,000 children were served due to multiple program design and implementation issues. Georgia had a similar program that failed. The legislature pivoted and passed a mandate in 2018. It has been five years since this promise was made to California's children and their families. Unfortunately, we all are still waiting for that financial relief to materialize.

We know that the most critical development of a young child occurs in the first few years of life, and our state priorities need to reflect that knowledge. While California is a leader on many issues, on this one, it lags behind over 30 states that require health plans to cover hearing aids in the commercial market and/ or the state exchange. We need you to hold the health plans accountable for this market failure. We urge you and your colleagues to continue to stand with us. Please, help us change California’s history on caring for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in California.

Sincerely,

[Your name (and district if you know it]
[Insert a picture of your child if you are comfortable]

Cc: The Honorable Megan Dahle

The Honorable Issac Bryan

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo

The Honorable Diane Dixon

The Honorable Mike Fong

The Honorable Gregg Hart

The Honorable Josh Lowenthal

The Honorable Devon Mathis

The Honorable Diane Papen

The Honorable Gail Pellerin

The Honorable Esmeralda Soria

The Honorable Phil Ting

The Honorable Robert Rivas