



October 19, 2021

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
2434 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui  
2311 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Guthrie and Matsui:

I write to share the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's support for H.R.5561, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2021.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 218,000 individuals who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act is one of the nation's important public health programs, providing early hearing screening and intervention to all newborns, infants, and young children in every state and territory. The program has helped ensure that more than 98 percent of newborns are screened for hearing loss today, up from 46.5 percent just two decades ago when the program was created. However, while most newborns are screened for hearing loss, many do not receive early intervention treatment services, especially those from historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic backgrounds, and other medically underserved populations. It is imperative to improve surveillance, ensure access to timely identification of congenital and acquired hearing loss, and enhance connection to follow up services, especially for underserved populations, as nearly three out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.

ASHA appreciates your longstanding commitment to ensuring that all newborns are screened for hearing loss, appropriately diagnosed, and receive needed follow-up hearing and speech services in a timely manner. The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2021 will ensure critical funding can be provided to support state-based infant hearing screening and intervention programs, and reduce the number of children who exhibit hearing loss but who do not receive the follow-up services they need. ASHA looks forward to working with you to advance this bill and achieve that goal.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Jerry White, ASHA's director of federal and political affairs, at [jwhite@asha.org](mailto:jwhite@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Lynn Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A. Lynn Williams, PhD, CCC-SLP  
2021 ASHA President