

SAMPLE LETTER

Date:

Dear Assemblymember _____:

I am a [pick one: a parent of a deaf child, or deaf consumer/professional/educator] who lives in your district. I understand that AB2072 will be heard before the Assembly Health Committee on April 13, 2010. I am asking you to please vote to OPPOSE AB2072.

AB 2072 proposes to amend the current Newborn Hearing Screening program. This program screens and identifies infants who are deaf or hard of hearing, and provides resources to families. The bill proposes to spend money on written information on the concept of “communication options” that is biased and misleading.

- No family should be limited to selecting an option over other opportunities for communicating with their deaf child. Picking one option over another robs the child of the ability and opportunity for full language acquisition. The focus should be on language acquisition. In order to learn to communicate, a child must first have developed a language. This bill proposes to replace consumer organizations with early education centers from the list of resources for parents and families of newborns identified.
- The consumer organizations have much information and wisdom to share with families about the experience of being deaf and providing deaf adult role models. There is an inherent conflict in this proposal; the early education centers stand to gain financially from this proposed language. This bill proposes to have audiologists provide this written information of communication options to parents and families.
- Audiologists are trained to measure and “treat” hearing loss by recommending hearing aids or cochlear implants. The majority of audiologists are not qualified to understand or explain the importance of ASL/English language acquisition, especially its impact on the child’s future academic achievements. Audiologists do not have early intervention training. They do not have the experience of raising a deaf or hard of hearing child or the experience of being a deaf adult.

(ADD YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE HERE. For example, *as a parent of a deaf child, I did not receive information about American Sign Language when my child was identified as deaf. . .*)

SOLUTION: As Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell pointed out, the solution is early visual language acquisition for infants and toddlers identified deaf and hard of hearing. Ninety percent of children identified as deaf are born in hearing households. These households do not know or understand the significance of providing a language that an infant can access visually instead of aurally. Language is the key to cognitive development & eventual academic development. The natural visual language for deaf people is ASL. For children, proficiency in the ASL provides a cornerstone for acquiring English proficiency.

Please be our legislative advocate and vote NO on AB2072! Thank you!

Your name _____
Your address _____
Your email contact _____