

# Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit

**Action:** Request your members of Congress to cosponsor H.R. 1479/S. 905, the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act.

### Background

In the 112th session of Congress, both the House and Senate introduced legislation (H.R. 1479 and S. 905) that would allow for a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids. Both House and Senate legislation provide for a tax credit of \$500 per hearing aid every 5 years. While the Senate legislation offers this credit for anyone who purchases a hearing aid, the House legislation stipulates that it only be for children up to the age of 21 and individuals 55 and older and only be available to households earning less than \$200,000 annually. Both bills, which have received strong bipartisan support, are meant to offer assistance to those who are most in need of these devices but are unable to afford them.

### Facts

- ◆ Hearing aids are not covered under Medicare or under the vast majority of state-mandated benefits. Sixty-one percent of hearing aid purchases involve no third party payment, which places the entire burden on the patient. (MarkeTrak)
- ◆ The average cost of a hearing aid in 2010 was approximately \$1,700. For those with hearing loss requiring two devices, the average out-of-pocket expense was over \$3,400. (MarkeTrak)
- ◆ While 95% of individuals with hearing loss could be successfully treated with hearing aids, only about 25% of the 34 million Americans with hearing loss (about 8.4 million people) used them in 2008. (MarkeTrak)
- ◆ This legislation is not intended to cover the full cost of hearing aids, but to provide some measure of financial assistance to the groups who are most in need of these devices but are unable to afford them, in particular those approaching or in retirement and families with children.

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### Reference

Better Hearing Institute. (2009). *MarkeTrak VIII: 25-Year Trends in the Hearing Health Market*. Retrieved from [www.betterhearing.org/pdfs/Kochkin\\_MarkeTrak8\\_OctHR09\\_hr.pdf](http://www.betterhearing.org/pdfs/Kochkin_MarkeTrak8_OctHR09_hr.pdf).