



Submitted via e-mail: jordan.hill@wvhouse.gov

February 3, 2020

Delegate Jordan Hill, Chair
Health and Human Resource Committee
Room 217E, Building 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

RE: HB 4414

Dear Chairman Hill and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to express opposition to HB 4144 as currently drafted. As you know, this legislation mandates the development of a resource for use by parents to monitor and track deaf and hard-of-hearing children's developmental milestones.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 1,000 ASHA members reside in West Virginia.

ASHA strongly supports the intent of HB 4414, which is to ensure young children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) have a strong language foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. ASHA also supports a family's right to decide the most appropriate language(s) (e.g., American Sign Language, spoken language, or both), communication mode(s) (e.g., augmentative and alternative communication), and education plan for their child. However, as currently drafted, HB 4414 includes elements that undermine these goals and create unnecessary and burdensome requirements that interfere with the decision-making authority of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).¹

Specification of English As A Preferred Language/Communication Mode

HB 4414 establishes English, defined in the bill as "spoken English, written English, or English with the use of visual supplements," as a preferred method of language communication included as part of the family resource. ASHA supports the use of the term "spoken language" as opposed to English, which is confusing to non-native English speakers. ASHA also endorses the parents' right to choose the appropriate language/communication mode for their child and family.

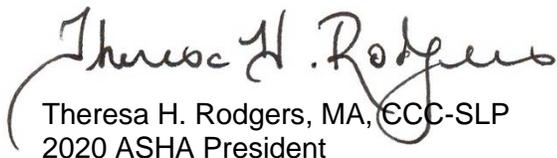
Creation of An Advisory Committee

HB 4414 proposes that a newly created advisory committee selects language developmental milestones for inclusion in the family resource. ASHA views such a committee as unnecessary and recommends its elimination. The bill already empowers the Department of Health and Human Services with developing the family resource and identifying developmental milestones. Additionally, the requirements of the bill to track and report milestones are already required

under IDEA to be included in the IFSP or IEP planning process. The creation of an advisory committee would undermine the decision-making authority of the IFSP/IEP team established under IDEA, which must include professionals knowledgeable about the assessment and services needed for children with disabilities, including those children who are D/HH and their parents.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position on HB 4414. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Tim Boyd, ASHA's director of state health care and education affairs, at tboyd@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP
2020 ASHA President

¹ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 34 U.S.C. § 300.320 et seq.