



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

May 15, 2026

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kim Schrier
U.S. House of Representatives
1110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joni Ernst
U.S. Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Neal Dunn
U.S. House of Representatives
466 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act

Dear Senators Baldwin and Ernst and Representatives Schrier and Dunn:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support for the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (H.R. 3277/S. 1677).

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 247,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students.

Audiologists and SLPs are integral members of interdisciplinary craniofacial teams that diagnose and treat individuals born with congenital anomalies affecting the face, mouth, and ears, including cleft lip and palate, ectodermal dysplasia, and other craniofacial conditions. These clinicians provide evaluation and treatment across the lifespan, from early feeding and swallowing intervention in infancy through ongoing management of speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and social communication needs.

The bipartisan Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) would require all group and individual health plans to cover medically necessary services related to the diagnosis and treatment of a congenital anomalies that primarily impact the function of the eyes, ears, nose, teeth, mouth, or jaw.

Individuals born with such anomalies frequently require audiology and speech-language pathology services related to feeding, swallowing, speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and social communication management. Despite the well-established medical necessity of these services, health plans routinely deny or delay coverage for care related to congenital anomalies by incorrectly categorizing them as cosmetic. This leads to patients and families incurring out-of-pocket costs for clinically necessary care. ELSA would close this coverage gap and ensure that children and adults with congenital anomalies can access the full range of services their conditions require.

As this bill proceeds through the legislative process, ASHA looks forward to working with Congress to ensure that individuals with congenital anomalies have access to the full scope of medically necessary audiology and speech-language pathology services. Ensuring access to these services is critical to achieving the goals of this legislation.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of individuals with congenital anomalies. We look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Josh Krantz, ASHA's director of federal affairs for health care, at jkrantz@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda I. Rosa-Lugo".

Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, EdD, CCC-SLP
2026 ASHA President