



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senate  
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S. 3739

Dear Senators Blackburn, Schiff, and Grassley:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support for S. 3739, the Veterans Hearing Aid Improvement Act of 2026.

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 specialize in the prevention, assessment, and treatment of hearing and balance disorders, including hearing aids. Across the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), audiologists play a critical role in diagnosing and treating hearing disorders—including tinnitus—which are the most prevalent service-connected disabilities among veterans.

S. 3739 would establish a two-year demonstration project to evaluate the use of FDA-approved, over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids for veterans with mild to moderate hearing loss. ASHA appreciates that this legislation would rely on expertly qualified audiologists to clinically evaluate and determine patient candidacy for the demonstration project. This provision ensures that only veterans for whom OTC hearing aids are medically appropriate and who present no clinical contraindications are directed into the OTC group. Preserving the role of audiologists in the VHA will ensure veterans receive appropriate devices as indicated by their clinical needs.

ASHA encourages the VHA, in designing and implementing this demonstration project, to ensure that participating veterans retain meaningful access to audiology services, counseling, and aural rehabilitation—not merely access to devices. OTC hearing aids can be a valuable tool, but their effectiveness hinges on continuing clinical guidance from audiologists. ASHA's clinical guidance recommends that adults with hearing loss should receive aural rehabilitation within a person-centered framework that includes at least one of the following four approaches: informational counseling, personal adjustment counseling, perceptual training, or multicomponent aural rehabilitation.<sup>1</sup>

The demonstration should capture a holistic set of outcome measures that accurately capture results of both the device and the full continuum of audiologic services. ASHA looks forward to working with you to advance this legislation and ensuring any subsequent VHA hearing aid demonstration program meets the needs of America's veterans.

Thank you for your bipartisan leadership on behalf of veterans with hearing loss. 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](mailto: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

---

<sup>1</sup> Aural Rehabilitation Clinical Practice Guideline Development Panel, Basura, G., Cienkowski, K., Hamlin, L., Ray, C., Rutherford, C., Stamper, G., Schooling, T., & Ambrose, J. (2023). American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Clinical Practice Guideline on Aural Rehabilitation for Adults With Hearing Loss. *American Journal of Audiology*, 32(1), 1–51. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2022\\_AJA-21-00252](https://doi.org/10.1044/2022_AJA-21-00252)