

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

The meeting was called to order by Senator Jan Meyers at
Chairperson

10 a.m. ~~pm~~ on March 26, 1984 in room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senators Francisco and Roitz

Committee staff present:

Emalene Correll, Legislative Research Department
Norman Furse, Revisor of Statutes office

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Rep. Arthur Douville
Gabriel R. Faimon, Rehabilitation Services, SRS
Sharon K. Cook, Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired, SRS
Fred Murphy, President, Kansas Association for the Deaf, Olathe
Ken Clark, Olathe School for the Deaf, Olathe
Dorothea E. Klein, Chairman, Kansas Board of Hearing Aid Examiners
Bobby Fisher

Others present: see attached list

HB 2893 - Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, continuation of its existence, duties and fees

Rep. Douville testified in support of HB 2893, and recommends that the Hearing Commission be continued for the next eight years.

Gabriel R. Faimon, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services, SRS, testified in support of HB 2893, and distributed information stating that the Commission was created to serve as collector and clearing house for information, and coordinator of services for deaf and hearing impaired Kansans. The Commission developed the following recommendations, which have been incorporated into HB 2893: extend the life of the Commission for eight years; provide authority for the Commission to offer interpreter services, funded from user fees; provide authority for Commission to conduct statewide message relay services by implementing a statewide toll-free line; and provide authority for the Commission to conduct fee-supported sign language classes in various communities across the state. Evidence is emerging that communication access is a serious problem for hearing impaired Kansans, due to a lack of understanding of a disability which affects communication. SRS urges favorable consideration of this bill. (Attachment #1). Mr. Faimon said the fiscal note on this bill would be less than \$173,000, or approximately \$1 per deaf or hearing impaired Kansan.

Sharon K. Cook, Executive Director, Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired, SRS, testified in support of HB 2893, and distributed testimony outlining nine categories of deaf/hard-of-hearing people in the Deaf Community, and describing the four areas of ability in which a hearing impaired individual can function. Ms. Cook stated that the establishment of statewide services as proposed in this bill will enable deaf and hearing impaired taxpayers access to the mainstream of Kansas life. She also distributed a Fact Sheet on the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired, giving the background, accomplishments and activities of the Commission. (Attachment #2).

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE,
room 526-S, Statehouse, at 10 a.m./~~P.M.~~ on March 26, 1984

Sister Ann Albrecht served as interpreter for Fred Murphy, President, Kansas Association of the Deaf, Olathe, who stated that the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired has done much to improve the quality of life for hearing impaired Kansans, and has generated an awareness of the needs of the hearing impaired. It is important that KCHI be given more time and approval to begin certain programs proposed in this bill, and Mr. Murphy said passage of HB 2893 will enable KCHI to continue its good work in behalf of Kansans who are experiencing "audio difficulties". (Attachment #3).

Sharon Cook served as interpreter for Bobby Fisher, who read the testimony of Mike Nunn, Wichita, which stated that HB 2893 represents the needs and desires of more than 170,000 deaf and hearing impaired citizens in Kansas. They feel they have been short-changed when they have tried to secure a fair share of the services that are available to the hearing population. The time has come when the deaf and hearing impaired people of Kansas should be heard and should have a voice in decisions that affect them and their standard of living. (Attachment #4).

In answer to a question as to whether this was in the Governor's budget, Ms. Cook replied that it was.

Ken Clark, Olathe School for the Deaf, Olathe, testified in support of HB 2893, and Sharon Cook interpreted for him. Mr. Clark used as an analogy how the lives of the people were affected by the broken power lines during the recent ice storm, and the broken lines of communication between the hearing impaired and the rest of the world. He displayed a map of Kansas showing the counties which had no services for the deaf; very few services offered by committees who serve handicapped people; services offered by more or less professional people; and two counties who were served by teenage children of deaf parents. A majority of the counties had no services for the deaf. He stated that there is a very strong need for continuation of the Commission for the Hearing Impaired, along with the additional services proposed in HB 2893.

Mitch Cooper, Topeka Resource Center for the Handicapped, distributed written testimony in support of HB 2893, but did not testify due to lack of time. In his written testimony Mr. Cooper stated that the Commission for the Hearing Impaired has been an excellent resource for his agency in identifying and meeting the special needs of deaf and severely hearing impaired persons. The majority of Kansas counties do not have resource centers for disabled persons, and this will would help to alleviate this problem in the area of TTY/voice message relaying; interpreter services; and introduction of a coordinated system of sign language classes. (Attachment #5).

HB 2851 - Hearing aid examiners, licensure requirements, audiometer recalibration

Dorothea E. Klein, Chairman, Kansas Board of Hearing Aid Examiners, testified in support of HB 2851, and said that in the past the Board has been responsible for checking calibration of audiometric equipment and they have not been able to find inspectors to do this. This bill says that the responsibility of checking the calibration rests with the person in whose office the equipment is located. (Attachment #6).

Senator Hayden moved that the minutes of March 23, 1984, be approved. Senator Gordon seconded the motion and it carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

SENATE
PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE 3-26-84

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME AND ADDRESS

ORGANIZATION

Dick Morrissey

KDHA + E

SHARON K. COOK

KS. Comm of Hearing Impaired

Gabe Fairman

SRS / Rehab. Svcs.

Gerard Johnson

Kansas Comm for Hearing Impaired / KSD

Fred Murphy

Kansas Assn. of the Deaf

Kenneth E. Clark

KS. STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Bobby Gene Fishere

Topeka Assn. of the Deaf

Mitch. Cooper 1119 W. 10th

Topeka Resource Center for the Handicapped

Eugene Ash

Topeka Assn of the Deaf

Phil Anderson

BUDGET DIV

~~Janet Lemmery~~

~~SRS~~

Minnie & Elie Symon

none

Sharon Leatherman

KHCA

Sister Judith Sotera

Ks. Assoc. Home Health Agencies

Marilyn Braedt

KINH

KEITH R. LANDIS

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLICATION FOR KANSAS

Dorothy E. Klein

Board of HA Examiners, Chair

Statement Regarding House Bill No. 2893

I. Short Title of Bill

An act concerning the Kansas commission for the deaf and hearing impaired; continuing the existence of the commission under the Kansas sunset law and expanding its duties; fees; amending K.S.A. 1983 Supp. 74-7274, 75-5391, 75-5392, 75-5393, 75-5394, 75-5395, 75-5396, 75-5397 and repealing the existing sections.

II. Background

Budgeting, purchasing, and related management functions necessary for the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired to carry out its statutory charges are administered under the direction and supervision of the Secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services. As a result, the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services provides office space, facilities and experienced professional assistance for administration of the Commission.

✓ The Commission was created to serve as a collector and clearinghouse for information and as an advocate and coordinator of services and programs for deaf and hearing impaired Kansans. With its statutory authority to make recommendations for needed improvements and serve as an advisory board with regard to new legislation affecting deaf and hearing impaired Kansans, the Commission developed the following recommendations which have been incorporated into House Bill No. 2893:

1. Enactment of legislation which would extend the life of the Commission for eight years beyond its current abolition date of July 1, 1984, continuing existing statutory authority for its operations;
2. Provide authority for the Commission to offer interpreter services, funded from user fees;
3. Provide authority for the Commission to conduct statewide message relay services by implementing a statewide toll-free line; and
4. Provide authority for the Commission to conduct fee-supported sign language classes in various communities across the state.

Governor Carlin has endorsed these recommendations of the Commission, including them in "The Governor's Legislative Message", presented on January 10, 1984.

III.

Discussion

Considering the very brief time of its existence, the Commission has started to collect and organize a body of information regarding the status of 173,000 hearing impaired persons in this State. As that information is being developed, clear evidence is emerging that communication access to the community, to society, is a serious problem for hearing impaired Kansans. Communication access is the core issue the Commission is attempting to address in the latter three recommendations cited earlier. That issue exists because: (1) few hearing persons can communicate with deaf persons; (2) there is an inadequate and unevenly distributed supply of qualified certified interpreters, since the existing system of interpreting with freelance services does not provide reasonably stable income to offset the personal financial investment for securing and maintaining certification; (3) a message relay system does not exist to make businesses, community organizations and individuals minimally accessible to deaf or hearing impaired persons by telephone; (4) sign language training opportunities exist at only a handful of fixed locations; and (5) lack of understanding by the general public that the exchange of written messages does not overcome English reading comprehension deficits, particularly for pre-vocationally deaf persons.

The issue of communication access is not a hidden issue. It's a quiet crisis. It's a quiet crisis resulting, in large part over the years, in denial of the problem due to a lack of understanding of a disability which affects communication. Some of the most difficult areas of access involve day-to-day involvement in community life and basic rights of participation in government. Our governmental system is built on the premise of individual initiative and freedom. Government needs to pursue and promote that premise so that each individual can participate in the community and contribute to society, rather than be deterred and thus become dependent. The Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired has demonstrated a role most appropriate for government to pursue and promote individual initiative and freedom. Those operations were conducted with minimum appropriation of State resources. The effectiveness of those operations can be significantly enhanced by incorporating the recommendations of the Commission into statute, moving the Commission from problem identification to problem resolution, through funds generated by appropriate fee authority granted to the Commission. What is the cost of problem resolution compared to the

value in terms of human dignity, a feeling of self-worth, a sense of independence, an opportunity to contribute to and participate in the community for each of the 173,000 deaf or hearing impaired Kansans? The cost would be less than \$1.00 per each deaf or hearing impaired Kansan, but the value is priceless.

IV. SRS Position

The recommendations of the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired are reflected in House Bill No. 2893. The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services urges favorable consideration of this Bill.

Gabriel R. Faimon, Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services
Social and Rehabilitation Services
296-3911
March 26, 1984

1474B

STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

Testimony Concerning House Bill 2893

An ACT concerning the Kansas commission for the deaf and hearing impaired; continuing the existence of the commission under the Kansas sunset law and expanding its duties

The Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired was established by the 1982 Legislature (K.S.A. 1982 Supp. 75-5391 et. seq.). The purpose of the Commission is to provide a centralized source for information collection and dissemination and to facilitate coordination between public and private organizations that serve hearing impaired individuals.

We have identified nine (9) categories of deaf/hard-of-hearing people in the Deaf Community. The Deaf Community implies togetherness - many different individuals with varying backgrounds, limitations and needs, but with one common characteristic: all live with the everyday frustrations of deafness or hearing loss. The nine categories are as follows:

- Oralists (those relying primarily on lipreading and speech);
- American Sign Language users (ASL, those who use a visual-gestural language not based on English);
- Users of ASL and English (Bilingual);
- Minimal Language users (non-users of English and ASL, those whose communication skills are limited to pantomime and other eclectic means);
- Deafened Adults (those who have lost hearing late in life after finishing most of their education but before the aging process could affect their hearing);
- Hearing impaired elderly (those who suffer hearing loss in advancing age);
- Hard-of-Hearing individuals;
- Multihandicapped hearing impaired (those who in addition to hearing loss may also have blindness, learning disabilities, diabetes, cerebral palsy, heart condition, orthopedic disabilities, mental illness, mental retardation, or any combination of the above);
- Hearing persons with deaf/hard-of-hearing members in the family.

Deafness or severe hearing loss at an early age may in itself be considered a multihandicapping condition. Depending upon a given hearing impaired individuals' ability to function in the following four areas, he may or may not be considered multihandicapped. These four areas are:

- 1) ability to hear and understand speech (with or without a hearing aid)
- 2) ability to speak and be understood by the average person (one who is not accustomed to "deaf speech")
- 3) ability to understand and use the English language
- 4) ability to understand and participate in the mainstream of American life and culture

Given the diversity of the hearing impaired community, the complexity of addressing the broad scope of needs not readily understood by many service providers and the limitations of our staff of two, the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired has nevertheless made gains in improving the quality of life for many hearing impaired individuals.

The ability to provide qualified interpreters on a fee for service basis to businesses, agencies, organizations, and individuals will significantly improve the quality of life for many deaf and hearing impaired Kansas citizens. The establishment of a statewide toll-free message relay service will enhance telephone usage and make telephone service for deaf and hearing impaired people accessible to businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals who do not possess special equipment. The provision of Sign Language instruction will encourage more people who hear normally to communicate with deaf and hearing impaired individuals and provide a vehicle for increasing public awareness of deafness and hearing impairment. These classes will be taught by deaf and hearing impaired instructors whenever possible. Instructors will be contracted by the Commission and paid out of fees collected from participants. Additional funds generated from Sign Language instruction will be used to provide training workshops for instructors. The establishment of statewide services as proposed in House Bill 2893 will enable deaf and hearing impaired taxpayers access to the mainstream of Kansas life.

Sharon K. Cook, Executive Director
Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired
Social and Rehabilitation Services
296-2874
March 26, 1984

KANSAS COMMISSION FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

FACT SHEET

March 26, 1984

As an information and referral agency, we are measured by the number of requests for information received, filled, referred to appropriate agencies and organizations, as well as the number of coordination models implemented. Fiscal Year 1983 began with meetings of the Commission members and the hiring of the Executive Director. I assumed my duties January 10, 1983, but the office did not get into full swing until mid-March when our secretary began work and we moved into our present office space. In only a few months, the performance goals for the year were 91% accomplished with the exception of referrals to agencies and organizations. We are currently exceeding the performance goals outlined in our budget and should easily surpass the goals for FY '84 with the exception of referrals. Statistics for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 1984 show requests for information to be already at 36% of our goal or a total of 71 calls. This is particularly significant as the obstacles to telephone accessibility are considerable for most hearing impaired individuals. The requests reflect three major areas of need: interpreting - 51%; sign language instruction - 44%; and telephone/telecommunications device for the deaf message relay - 25%. These three areas of need are incorporated in House Bill 2893.

Significant accomplishments during the first year of operation include:

- Published 1983 Directory of Resources for Hearing Impaired Kansans. A 50 page booklet distributed free-of-charge to consumers, service providers and other interested parties. Copies were distributed via deaf clubs, the school for the deaf, the booth at the state fair, parents groups, audiologists and speech therapists, conferences, state agencies and board members. Of the 2,000 copies printed approximately 1500 were distributed as listed above while 400 were mailed upon request from the KCHI office. Reactions to the Directory have been positive.
- Published the Survey of Kansas Families with Hearing Impaired Children by Marnie Campbell. Distributed to board members, leaders in the deaf and hearing impaired community in Kansas and in the United States, to various individuals (professionals, parents, deaf individuals) upon request, and to the Kansas legislators. Approximately 300+ copies have been distributed. Reactions to the Survey have been positive, with deep concern over the needs and lack of coordination of services to hearing impaired children and their families in Kansas.
- Co-sponsored Sign Language Instructor/Leadership Training, July 10-15, 1983 with Johnson County Community College Interpreter Training Program and the National Association of the Deaf/NEPTSLI. Thirteen individuals were selected to participate in this week-long training, seven of whom were hearing impaired. Reactions were positive and further training

was requested by the participants for next year.

Other activities include:

- Provided information and referral to the public and maintained a log of contacts from information and referral
- Coordinated five sign language classes in Topeka with community agencies
- Gave speeches on the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired and on deafness to: Sertoma of Topeka, Rotary Club of Olathe, 3rd grade public school classes in Junction City, Kansas Chapter of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, College class at Emporia State University, Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc. Convention, Legal Aid Society of Topeka, Retired Kansas Highway Employees, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors
- Attended conferences and conventions: Governor's Conference on Agricultural Disability (March, 1983), American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (June, 1983), Kansas University's Legislative Conference (January, 1983 and 1984) and Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc. Convention (June, 1983)
- Co-sponsored appearance in Topeka of Sunshine T00, theatre group from National Technical Institute for the Deaf (March, 1983)
- Attended meetings of consumer groups including: Kansas Association of the Deaf, Kansas Council of Disabled Persons, Kansas Roundtable of Organizations Serving the Hearing Impaired, Inc., Missouri-Kansas Telecommunications for the Deaf, Topeka Association of the Deaf, Olathe Club of the Deaf, Salina Club of the Deaf, Kansas City Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- Member of Hearing Conservation Advisory Board and attended meetings thereof
- Wrote bi-monthly articles for Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc. Newsletter
- Provided materials for Kansas Roundtable of Organizations Serving the Hearing Impaired to distribute at the State Fair (September, 1983)
- Met with hospital administrators and concerned deaf individuals to promote compliance with Section 504 of Public Law 93-112
- Coordinated training for Topeka Association of the Deaf from the Office of Civil Rights
- Wrote issue papers for Vocational Rehabilitation budget justification
- In addition to this the Executive Director has interpreted for countless meetings, Vocational Rehabilitation counseling situations, and emergency situations (hospitals, police, etc.) -- all of this making heavy inroads on the director's time and energies

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

March 26, 1984

H.B. 2893

My name is Fred Murphy. I live in Olathe. I am president of the Kansas Association of the Deaf and I am also a member of the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired.

The establishment of the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired by the 1982 Legislature has done much to improve the quality of life for hearing impaired Kansans. Although so much has been accomplished in this short time there is still so much more that can be done. The only thing needed now is the passage of H.B. 2893 which is now in your hands.

The establishment of the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired has generated an awareness of the needs of Kansas' large hearing impaired population. Through the efforts of Ms. Sharon Cook, Executive Director of the Commission, other agencies, both state and local, are beginning to serve the needs of hearing impaired people, something they could not do effectively before. The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners has provided funds to make county agencies accessible to the hearing impaired through interpreters and telecommunication devices such as this one. In Topeka

the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center is beginning a program to provide interpreter and other services for the hearing impaired in Topeka and Shawnee County. Wichita has had such a program for several years. This does not mean that the Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired is not needed. It means that the efforts of the KCHI are being given needed assistance as a state-wide program is developed.

With all this awareness developing it is important that the KCHI be given more time and approval to begin certain programs that are spelled out in H.B. 2893.

H.B. 2893 has the unqualified approval of the deaf population of Kansas. It asks only for more time--and in effect it "mandates" more work for the KCHI and its staff. This may be something new for a group to ask for legislation without more funds--just more time and more work to do.

Therefore I respectfully solicit your support for H.B. 2893. It will give us the "go ahead" signal that we need and want so that the KCHI can continue with its good work in behalf of Kansans who are experiencing "audio difficulties".

Thank you!

POPULATION STATISTICS

DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED POPULATION OF KANSAS

In 1969, the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare awarded a grant to the National Association of the Deaf to conduct a national census of the deaf population. The results of this census were summarized and published in 1974 by Jerome D. Schein, Director, Deafness Research & Training Center, New York University and Marcus T. Delk, Jr., Coordinator of Survey Research, Deafness Research & Training Center, New York University.

There have been no attempts to conduct either national or state census of the deaf and/or hearing impaired populations since the census of 1969-1971. However, smaller and independent surveys conducted by various interested individuals have brought to light certain percentage figures which closely approximate the figures established by the so-called Schein - Delk report.

It is therefore possible to arrive at population statistics by using the percentage figures established by Schein - Delk (1974) and repeated by subsequent surveys by others.

Based on the 1980 census which places the Kansas population at 2,363,208 we conservatively estimate the deaf and hearing impaired population as follows:

Total hearing impaired population - Kansas	<u>173,000</u>	} 1980 PROJECTION
Deaf citizens (became deaf after age of 19)	<u>22,000</u>	
Pre-vocationally deaf (became deaf before the age of 19)	<u>6,000</u>	
Hearing impaired citizens who experience difficulties due to their hearing impairment	<u>145,000</u>	

There were 253,000 Kansans over the age of 65. Applying the same formulas we find that there were 50,600 Senior citizens of Kansas who experience hearing impairment significant enough to impair their communication.

The 1983, and the 1984 census figures for the State of Kansas are larger than the 1970 census figures used in this estimate of the Kansas deaf and/or hearing impaired population--therefore the number of deaf and hearing impaired will be proportionally larger now.

Testimony before the Committee on Public Health and Welfare

The Kansas State Senate

Topeka, Kansas

Tuesday, March 26, 1984

House Bill 2893 concerning: The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and
Hearing Impaired....

Ms. Chairman, Senators, and Friends of the Deaf:

My name is Mike Nunn. I'm from Wichita, and I am deaf. I am here to ask you to approve and pass on House Bill 2893 as it is written. I ask you to do that because it represents the needs and the desires of the more than 170,000 Deaf and Hearing-Impaired citizens of this State.

In a general way, I am speaking for those of us who cannot speak for themselves. We have been told to come here and speak clearly, concisely, factually, and without a display of emotion. I therefore ask your indulgence. I ask that because I speak to you on a subject about which we care, passionately and intensely, and we cannot discuss it without emotion.

The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired represents the high point in the lives of two great Kansas deaf leaders - - two men who had the ability, the vision, and the drive to organize and to inspire us to believe in ourselves - - to the extent that we made the effort to "stump the state", to volunteer our time, our money, and our strength to have our Commission.

Atch. 4

I am speaking of Fred Murphy, our beloved "Old Warrior" and the current President of the Kansas Association of the Deaf and of Wilbur Ruge of Wichita whose silence conceals one of the finest minds I have ever been privileged to know.

We are aware that you do not and cannot know who we are. We know that you pass us on the streets every day and do not realize that we are victims of the hidden handicap which cuts us off from people. You cannot know that, by and large, we are quiet, responsible, respectable, hard working citizens who pay our taxes, do not clog the welfare rolls, send our kids to school and are enormously proud of the fact that those statements are true of us.

We are, and have always been, "short-changed" when we have tried to secure a fair share of the services that are available to the hearing population. Those services may be a public utility such as the Telephone company, a contact with the Better Business Bureau regarding a fraudulent contractor, or contact with a State Representative to make our feelings known about the price of electricity. The details are limited only by your imagination.

Our employers are not aware of our abilities beyond our manual skills and without an advocate to intercede for us, teaching deaf awareness and the means to simple practical communication with us, it will always be so. A long and endless night of isolation, frustration, paternalistic pats on the head, and never a sunrise..

The time has come, and is in fact long over due, when the Deaf and Hearing Impaired people of Kansas should be heard, when we should have a voice in decisions that affect us, our standard of living, and the lives of our children.

GIVE US K.C.H.I., our ears and voice to the world around us, and we shall do exactly that...

GIVE US K.C.H.I., that we may have call forwarding and thus a telephone link to Emergency Police, Fire, and Medical Services, and to each other.

GIVE US K.C.H.I., our advocate in law enforcement situations, that we may never again be treated either better or worse than any hearing person in the same situation.

AGAIN, GIVE US K.C.H.I. as it is described in H.B. - 2893 so that we can export practical realistic communications with deaf people to industry and to health and legal and teaching and personnel professionals around the state, and HAVE DONE WITH OUR SECOND CLASS CITIZENSHIP.

Ladies and Gentlemen, forgive me if I try your patience with this emotional testimony. This is such an important moment for those of us who are the consumers of the Commission's product.

I leave you now with the first two verses of William Earnest Henley's "Invictus" written in 1875:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods may be,
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of change,
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY

to

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

March 26, 1984

BY: Mitch Cooper

Representing: Topeka Resource Center for the Handicapped

Re: HB 2893

I am a director of a center that provides resources for disabled persons. My job involves working closely with a variety of local and state agencies and voluntary organizations. The Kansas Commission for the Hearing Impaired (KCHI) has been an excellent resource for my agency in identifying and meeting the special needs of deaf and severely hearing-impaired persons.

Thanks in part to the efforts of KCHI, the Topeka Resource Center for the Handicapped (TRCH) has initiated a series of sign language classes that are taught by deaf individuals and are geared toward hearing persons. TRCH also plans to hire a full-time Interpreter/Deaf Specialist by the beginning of May. Additionally, TRCH offers a TTY/voice message relay system for residents of Shawnee County.

In sum, KCHI has helped TRCH to improve its quality of services to deaf and severely hearing-impaired persons. Unfortunately, the majority of Kansas counties do not have a resource center for disabled persons. This means that many of our communities need far more than technical assistance to break down the communication barriers in their areas.

HB 2893 would help to alleviate this problem by expanding KCHI's authority in three critical areas. The devotion of its energies and knowledge in the areas of TTY/voice message relaying, interpreter services and the introduction of a coordinated system of sign language classes will help Kansas demonstrate its capacity and willingness to make its resources and its governing system accessible to all of its citizens.

AC 3-26-84

Miss Dorothea E. Klein, Chairman
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KANSAS BOARD OF HEARING AID EXAMINERS

1st Floor, 1710 West 10th Street

TOPEKA, KANSAS 66604

234-4316

March 23, 1984

Regarding HB-2851

I am happy with the bill as amended in House Committee on Governmental Organization.

Audiometry is not an exact science since there are variables in evaluating a hearing loss namely the response of a patient, the alertness of the patient, the age of the patient. Considering these variables, it is necessary to have audiometric equipment that is in calibration, and not another variable.

Through the years the Board has not been able to find inspectors for checking the calibration. Because it is difficult to find qualified people willing to travel and work for the money we can afford to pay them.

Dorothea E. Klein MS.
Chairman
Board of Hearing Aid Examiners

DEK/ms

Atch. 6