

Hello, my name is Janell Mosher. I was born profoundly deaf and have had a cochlear implant since I was two years old. From the time I was very young, I was blessed to have early access to language and communication through basic sign language. As I grew older, I continued in Signed Exact English while learning how to hear and speak. Then during my teenage years, I began my immersion of American Sign Language and Deaf culture. Since I had strong language from the beginning, I was and am still able to pursue and focus on my academic goals and learning American Sign Language more freely.

Over the past few years, I have had experiences around Deaf students ranging in age and background. I was discouraged to find out that many had come from challenges and struggles therefore leading to their being behind academically. Most of these struggles were rooted in one very important aspect that can easily be taken for granted—a strong language foundation. Sadly, these students lacked that important aspect and now are trying to achieve academic goals with much difficulty.

Passage of Senate Bill 444 will ensure that each Deaf and hard of hearing child has assessment to support his language and communication, not just anytime—but from the beginning of his life with consistent follow-ups as they become older. I believe God has put each of us here in this exact time and place for a reason—to consider how we can better support our Deaf children both now and in the future. Thank you for listening.