



February 14, 2012

Indiana Senators
Indiana State Capitol Building
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Indiana Senators,

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), the nation's premier civil rights organization of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America since 1880, requests that you vote against House Bill 1367.

The NAD asks that you carefully consider the flaws of House Bill 1367. There has been much debate about the quality of the outreach program in Indiana to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children receive the services needed to acquire language and education on a level equal to their peers. While improvements are always possible with outreach programs, there is no factual information that lays out the supposed problems with the existing outreach center which has always been fair and balanced. However, in response to concerns about its neutrality, the outreach center has in recent months utilized groups with differing philosophies to discuss educational options with all parents of newborn deaf and hard of hearing children. This system was a new effort to provide balanced and unbiased information to those parents. Only a few months later, there is a legislative push that overrides this new initiative. There is no apparent effort to improve the existing outreach center or to fund any such improvements.

House Bill 1367 would not resolve the alleged problem but would needlessly start from square one, requiring significant wasteful expenditures in a time of austerity. The bill would require immense staffing changes, training, securing new facilities, and relocation of equipment, resources, files, and information. More importantly, what guarantee is there that the new system would be neutral and unbiased?

As a legislator, it is your duty to ensure that all citizens particularly children receive a fair chance in life. Deaf and hard of hearing children do not need to be further disadvantaged by a hastily created outreach center without careful thought as to why it should replace an efficient one that already utilizes the differing groups to provide neutral information.

The NAD urges you to protect the education and future of deaf and hard of hearing children by voting against House Bill 1367.

Sincerely,

Howard A. Rosenblum
Chief Executive Officer