

February 16, 2021

RE: ***Opposition to Amendment # 302884 / SB 700***

Dear Senate Health Policy Committee Member:

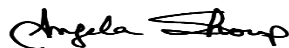
On behalf of the American Academy of Audiology (the Academy), I am writing in opposition to Amendment # 302884 to Florida Senate Bill 700 that would remove the current state requirement that individuals receive an evaluation and testing by a licensed audiologist and instead allow individuals to simply sign a waiver prior to receiving a hearing aid. The Academy is the largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists, in the world. The Academy promotes quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness and support of research.

The purpose of the audiology examination is to diagnose, manage, and then develop appropriate treatment plans, which may include the fitting of hearing aids, for patients. The removal of professional evaluation and replacement with an individual waiver is contrary to the best interest of patients with hearing loss. They may have ear disease and/or comorbidities contributing to or causing their hearing difficulties which may require medical or surgical treatment. Audiologists are trained to not only measure and characterize the type and degree of hearing loss to ensure amplification devices are appropriately selected and prescribed, but also to recognize through their evaluation when consumers should seek medical treatment as recommended by the Food and Drug Administration.

The existing statutory language requiring appropriate evaluation from a licensed audiologist was specifically included to protect consumers. Individuals attempting to select a hearing aid without professional assistance may at best pay for a device that does not meet their needs and at worst, further damage their hearing or fail to receive timely treatment for a medical condition.

In light of the concerns outlined in this letter, the Academy respectfully requests a “No” vote on Amendment #302884. If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact Susan Pilch, Senior Director, Government Relations at spilch@audiology.org.

Sincerely,



Angela Shoup, PhD

President, American Academy of Audiology