

January 30, 2019

Dear Lawmaker,

I'd like to voice my strong support for the Consumer Telecoil-Bluetooth Education Bills (HB 1078/SB 5210).

Hearing aids are vital communication tools for people with hearing loss, but too often, people don't know how to use every function that hearing aids offer. As many as two-thirds of people weren't told about telecoils when they purchased their hearing aids, according to a recent survey. Without telecoil knowledge and know-how, people can't connect to the many public assistive listening systems in Washington State, such as the Seattle and King County Council chambers, the Seattle Rep theatre, the Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center, and dozens of churches, retirement homes, and other spaces.

This bill will help hearing care professionals prioritize telecoil and Bluetooth education, empowering their patients to buy the best hearing aid for their needs---and helping ensure that patients understand and use the full functionality of their hearing aids. Hearing aids are an expensive investment—perhaps thousands of dollars—but they can't help if they're left in a drawer unused.

The Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing supports HB 1078/SB 5210, and the bill is believed to be of no additional cost to the state or to taxpayers.

I urge you to stand with people with hearing loss and vote YES to help them hear in more places, stay active in their communities, and to live, travel, work independently.

Sincerely,