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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chairman
House Health and Government Operations Committee Members
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

RE: HB 910 – Hearing Aids for Adults - Request for Favorable Report

Dear Chairman Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The ability to hear is often taken for granted by most of us. For some members of our community hearing loss propels them into a segregated world of isolation. The inability to afford hearing aids commits these adults to a life filled with obstacles and often barriers to every-day life.

COVID -19, brought this issue to the forefront of my conscience. During a state of emergency all of us watched the briefings from Federal, State and local officials accompanied by an individual performing sign language. This visual form of communication provoked my thoughts about the issue of hearing aid access and affordability.

During last year's lock down many of us stayed in touch with family, friends and others with the use of technology to overcome loneliness and to maintain human connections. Can you imagine, how difficult it was for individuals in our communities without access to hearing aids. Today you will hear testimony from some of those Marylanders. The ability to help them remains with this committee.

As you listen to their stories, I ask you to also consider if you were hearing impaired how effectively you could participate in this legislative session if you were unable to afford hearing aids.

HB 910 is simple, it provides a minimal healthcare benefit of \$750 per hearing aid to be provided by those individual healthcare providers who do not already provide this benefit. Current law, allows insurance companies who provide this benefit to establish a cap and renewal period.

I believe this bill is important for many Marylanders therefore, I respectfully request your favorable report on HB 910.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Ann Lisanti".

Mary Ann Lisanti