



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB669**

Testimony by Delegate Andrew Pruski

February 21, 2024 – Economic Matters Committee

**What the Bill Does:**

This bill is designed to alter the method used to determine the percentage of hearing loss deafness for purpose of workers' compensation and alters the method used to determine the deduction required to be made to allow for the average amount of hearing loss from nonoccupational causes in the population for purposes of calculating workers' compensation benefits for occupational deafness. In addition, this bill would also require tinnitus to be considered part of a covered employee's hearing loss.

**Why the Bill is Important:**

The purpose of this bill is to address both medical and legislative updates based upon fair and reasonable standards. The bill addresses a long-standing issue with hearing loss. As the diagnosis of hearing loss and medical advancements continue to improve over time, medical science has also shown that hearing loss can occur sooner than expected due to noise or another incident that creates exposure. This bill also updates the way that hearing loss is calculated to add an additional frequency level. Last, but not least, the bill defines Tinnitus (otherwise known as ringing in the ears) in the Workers' Compensation Statute. This language is needed to better define and reflect the components of hearing loss.

**Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably:**

HB669 updates the process for which hearing loss is determined for the purposes of workers' compensation and adds tinnitus to the eligible types of hearing loss. This bill protects Maryland public safety workers and workers throughout the state. **On behalf of Maryland first responders and workers, we urge a favorable report on HB669.**