

SESSION OF 2022

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 343

As Amended by House Committee of the Whole

Brief*

SB 343, as amended, would replace statutory references to “hearing impairment” and similar terms with “hard of hearing,” “hearing loss,” or “deaf.” The bill would also make technical amendments.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare at the request of Senator O’Shea on behalf of a constituent.

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

In the Senate Committee hearing, Senator O’Shea and representatives from We the Deaf People and the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provided **proponent** testimony, stating that “hearing impaired” is viewed as a negative term to most people who are deaf. The bill would align statutory language with the terms preferred by persons with hearing loss.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Association of the Deaf, Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns, and Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (KSLHA).

No neutral or **opponent** testimony was provided.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The Senate Committee amended the bill to update language in four additional locations in statute at the request of a representative of KSLHA, updating “speech and hearing conditions and diseases” to “speech, language, and hearing disorders” and “speech and hearing impairments” to “speech or language disorders.”

Senate Committee of the Whole

The Senate Committee of the Whole made a technical amendment to the bill, reinserting a word that was struck in error.

House Committee on Health and Human Services

In the House Committee hearing, Senator O’Shea, a representative of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and a private citizen provided **proponent** testimony, stating the term “hearing impaired” carries a negative connotation, and the bill would update statute to terms preferred by the deaf community.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc., Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns, and KSLHA.

No other testimony was provided.

House Committee of the Whole

On March 21, 2022, the House Committee of the Whole made a technical amendment to the bill, to remove a statute that would not be amended by the bill and references to it.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill as introduced, the bill would have no fiscal effect.

Hearing loss; statutory terminology