

Chairman Ruby and fellow members of the committee,

My name is David Zimmerman, a former teacher of 31 years at the North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center and I am testifying in support of the legislative study proposal of HB1097.

With the ever-evolving changes with technology, I feel that the elderly people who are losing their hearing or already have some sort of a hearing loss struggle to communicate in a way with their basic needs for accessible communication. Having questions answered is pivotal when making the right decisions for a health insurance plan. Effective communication would go a long way to make the process simpler. It would be beneficial if we had software that would help to make the process easier and smoother.

I know for a fact that North Dakota is struggling with the lack of certified interpreters that would be available especially in the rural areas. As a matter of fact, there are a lot of Social Security offices across the state that are closed and having face-to-face meetings is impossible if the office is closed! That is a huge barrier to overcome in terms of communication with this situation.

It would be a great positive if the state would consider a study that would facilitate solving the issues highlighted during the study.

Respectfully,
David Zimmerman