

# 13 “Lucky” Ways to Participate in Legislative Efforts Within Your State: Lessons from Idaho’s Progressive Pediatric Hearing Aid Legislation



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# FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES



- We have **no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships** in the products or services described, reviewed, evaluated or compared in this presentation.

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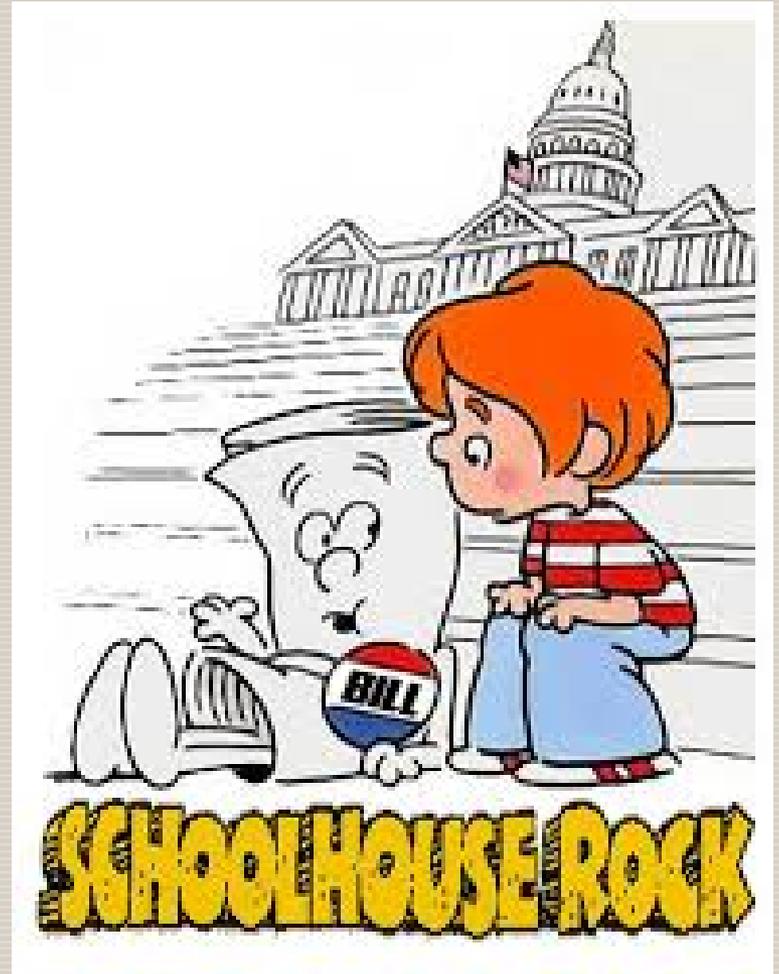
# 13 “Lucky” Legislative Concepts



1. Do your homework
2. Develop elevator speech
3. Call/visit your local representatives
4. Build a team
5. Set goals/expectations
6. Get bipartisan support
7. Bill vs. Rule change
8. Infographics, visuals & Communications
9. Know State Statistics
10. Collaborate with other states like yours
11. Testify confidently
12. Review parliamentary procedures
13. Express gratitude

# Know the process

I'm just a bill



# 1. Do Your Homework



- Be familiar with political process
- What is your current law?
- Research code online
  - Call the legislative research Library in your state
- Collect past appeals
- Look a previous efforts

## 2. Develop elevator speech



- 2 mins or less
- Critical substantive information
- State the facts
- Don't beat around the bush
- Be prepared to stand and deliver

# 3. Contact local representatives



- Start with local representatives
- Look for Representatives on H&W Committee
- Use your prepared elevator speech
- They want to know:
  - Who is this affecting
  - Consequences of not making change
  - How much it'll cost.
- Tell them about the fact that your claims keep getting denied and you need help.
- Ask to meet in person

## 4. Build a Team



- Get a Core Group – to see it through at every meeting – Parent base is powerful
- Get an extended multidisciplinary group professionals – including Dr.'s, teachers, audiologists, to call upon to give advice, testimony, at critical/fine tuning times group together ask for participation/feedback.
- Schedule meetings in person or via Zoom- plan out each member's role on the team and a course of action.
- Multiple areas of State



## 5. Set Goals and Expectations



- Coverage for 0-26 years old
- \$3,000 every 3 years per hearing aid per ear
- Congenital AND acquired hearing losses
- Define hearing devices (CI, BAHA, HA)
- Speech and language habilitation

# Idaho Pediatric Hearing Device Rule Change



“Hearing aids, auditory osseointegrated (bone conduction) devices, cochlear implants and examination for or fitting of them, for congenital or acquired hearing loss that, without intervention may result in cognitive or speech development deficits of a covered dependent child, covering not less than one device every thirty-six(36) months per ear with loss and not less than forty-five(45) language/speech therapy visits during the first twelve(12) months after delivery of the covered device.”

## 6. Get Bipartisan Support



- This is not a partisan issue but you need bipartisan support to get it through
- Politician's want to hear from us and need to show their contribution to the community.
- Illana Rubel, Pat McDonald. Blue vs. Red, Social programs vs no law changes
- Reasons we got traction
  - Rep. Pat McDonald's support as a Republican
  - Meeting with Dir. H&W Committee Chair - following his direction

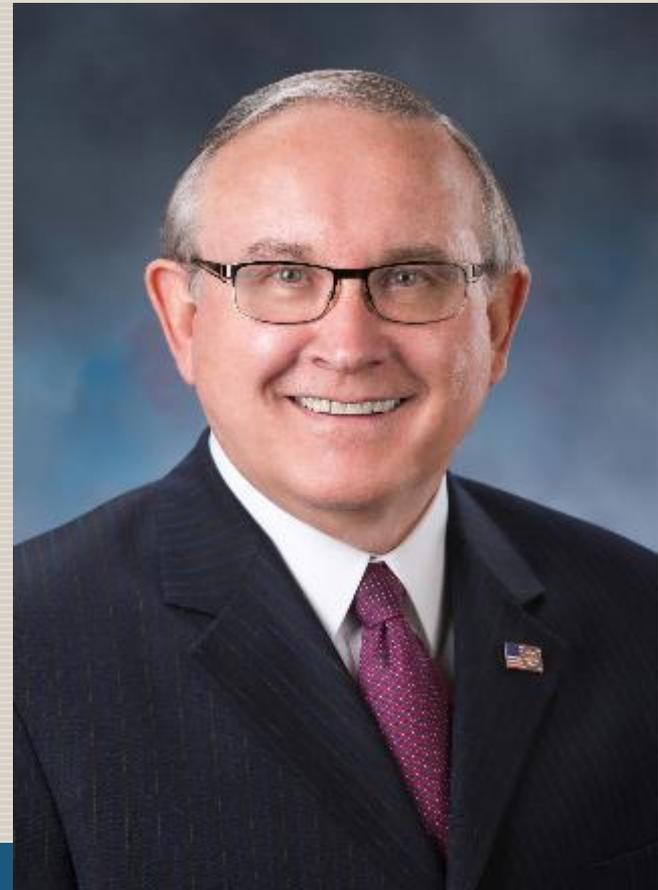
# Bipartisan Sponsorship



Illana Rubel (D)



Patrick McDonald (R)



## 7. Bill vs. Rule change



- Most changes are coming through amendments to the laws & insurance codes mentioned above which is a lot easier to get done
- Department of Insurance - DOI  
<https://doi.idaho.gov/publicinformation/laws/Rulemaking>

# 8. Visuals and Communications



- Quickly and effectively display points
- Letters of support
- Multiple points of contact
- Points to highlight:
  - What's the issue?
  - Who does this affect?
  - What is the long term impact?
  - What is the cost?



Idaho insurance providers **do not** cover pediatric hearing aids.

3 Idaho sisters. 3 sets of hearing aids.  
\$6,000 each set x 3, \$18,000 every 3-5 years.

Idaho Families Need Pediatric Hearing Aid Legislation.



Please join Rep. Rubel in supporting pediatric hearing aid legislation.

22 States have pediatric hearing aid legislation, 8 in progress.



"Research shows that by the time a child with hearing loss graduates from high school, more than \$400,000 per child can be saved in special education costs if the child is identified early and given appropriate educational, medical, and audiological services."

White, K. R., (1995). Universal screening for infant hearing impairment: International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology

Idaho Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Need Your Help

[idhandsandvoices.org](http://idhandsandvoices.org)





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IDAHO HANDS & VOICES™ 

# Effective example from Texas



## SB552 & HB490 HEARING AID & COCHLEAR IMPLANT COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN IN TEXAS

[www.lettexashear.org](http://www.lettexashear.org)

### THE NEED

Hearing aids are considered cosmetic and not covered by insurance. However, a lack of early intervention and amplification in young children can severely impact **speech, language, and brain development; academic achievement; and social and emotional development.**

### THE STATS

**3 in 1,000 babies** are born with permanent hearing loss.

With an annual birth rate of nearly 400,000 babies, Texas has approximately **1,200 infants** born with some level of hearing loss each year.

### THE HISTORY

Recognizing that early intervention is key, Texas was an early adopter of **universal newborn hearing screenings** in 1999. However, most health insurance policies do not cover, or only pay a small stipend toward hearing technology which is the next critical step in early intervention.

### THE COST

Hearing aids cost up to \$6,000 per pair and must be replaced every 3 - 5 years.

Cochlear implant surgery is covered by most insurance plans but necessary accessories often come out of pocket.

Without intervention, special education costs for deaf or hard of hearing students can total \$420,000 per child with a lifetime cost of approx. \$1 million in special education, lost wages and health complications.

### THE PEOPLE

Representative **Rodney Anderson** is sponsoring HB 490 in the Texas House of Reps.

There are currently 19 authors and co-authors on HB490 including S. Davis, D. Howard, T. Oliverson, D. Bernal, C. Anderson, C. Bell, G. Capriglione, D. Darby, J. Isaac, C. Israel, J. Johnson, W. Metcalf, R. Miller, S. Muñoz, Jr., J. Raney, K. Roberts, E. Thompson & J. White

Senator **Lois Kolkhorst** is sponsoring SB552 in the Texas Senate.  
SB552 is co-authored by Sen. Garcia.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

**20 other states** have already passed legislation requiring insurance coverage for children's hearing devices. Many of these states were **NOT** supportive of insurance mandates in general but made an exception because of the low premium increase required to off set the cost, estimated between **\$0.03 and \$0.04** per insured citizen per month.

Georgia is next to pass this legislation 47 - 6 in House & 155 - 5 in Senate.  
It's on the Governor's desk now!

**SUPPORT TEXAS CHILDREN!  
VOTE YES ON SB552 & HB490!**



## LET UTAH CHILDREN HEAR

To encourage and support access to quality hearing health care including state-of-the-art hearing technology for all children in Utah who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.



PROVIDING HEARING TO CHILDREN IS COST EFFECTIVE

# 100

### NEWBORNS

are assessed for and diagnosed as Deaf or Hard of Hearing every year in the state of Utah. Many more are identified at older ages.



# 24

### OTHER STATES



have already passed similar legislation while several more states are currently working on passing legislation.

# 10%

### INSURANCE COVERAGE

of parents report insurance coverage for hearing aids for their child.



## COST EFFECTIVE



### FOR UTAHNS

to cover hearing aids, bone conduction hearing devices, microphone systems, and rehabilitative services.

### CHANGE A KID'S WORLD

Email us at [letutahchildrenhear@gmail.com](mailto:letutahchildrenhear@gmail.com)  
Call us at (435) 764-4074

## LET UTAH CHILDREN HEAR



PROVIDING HEARING TO CHILDREN IS COST EFFECTIVE

### The Need

Speech, language, social and cognitive development of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing is likely to be impaired by their hearing loss. However, access to hearing aids and intervention services improve outcomes dramatically.

Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing can learn to hear, speak and learn at a comparable rate with their hearing peers when provided with appropriate intervention.

### The Facts

Utah spear-headed universal newborn hearing screenings by mandating screenings in 1998. However, children identified early do not have access to hearing devices and habilitation services through insurance in order to complete the next vital steps in early intervention.

Approximately 30,000 babies are born in Utah every year. 100 of those babies will be diagnosed with a significant permanent hearing loss. About 40% of those children are covered by Medicaid.

### The Concern

Under Utah code 33A-22-610, insurance companies are required to include coverage for care and treatments of medically diagnosed congenital defects. Childhood hearing loss is a congenital defect in most cases. Insurance companies are currently not covering treatments.

Currently, the state funds the Children's Hearing Aid Program which only provides a single pair of hearing aids for children age 0-6. This program is underserving children with hearing loss in the state.

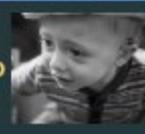
### The Cost

A pair of hearing aids can cost up to \$6,000 and must be replaced every 3-5 years. Since hearing loss can be hereditary, some families have multiple children with hearing loss needs. Many families cannot afford to provide the necessary rehabilitative treatments.

Providing hearing aids to children with hearing loss will reduce the costs borne by the state, including an estimated \$42,000 in special education, and much more in social welfare programs. Lifetime cost estimates of insufficiently treated hearing loss can total approximately \$1 Million.



### CHANGE A KID'S WORLD



# Effective example from Utah

<https://www.letutahchildrenhear.com/>

Use website builders or templates

- Wix/ Canva

# 9. Know State Statistics



- EHDI Coordinator is a great resource
- # Children born in state annually
- # Diagnosed with hearing loss annually
  - congenital + acquired
- # Children receiving DHH school services
- # Children covered under Medicaid
  - 40% in Idaho



i.e.s.d.b.

Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind

## IESDB Outreach Program

### Regional D/HH Information - a/o January 2, 2018

#### Region 2 - Lewiston

School Age = 61  
Age 0-3 = 7

#### Region 3 - Nampa/Caldwell

School Age = 282  
Age 0-3 = 28  
DEAF/BLIND = 5

#### Region 4 - Meridian

School Age = 460  
Age 0-3 = 40  
DEAF/BLIND = 5

#### Region 1 Post Falls

School Age = 138  
Age 0-3 = 27  
DEAF/BLIND = 6

#### Region 7 - Idaho Falls

School Age = 172  
Age 0-3 = 20  
DEAF/BLIND = 3

#### Region 6 - Pocatello

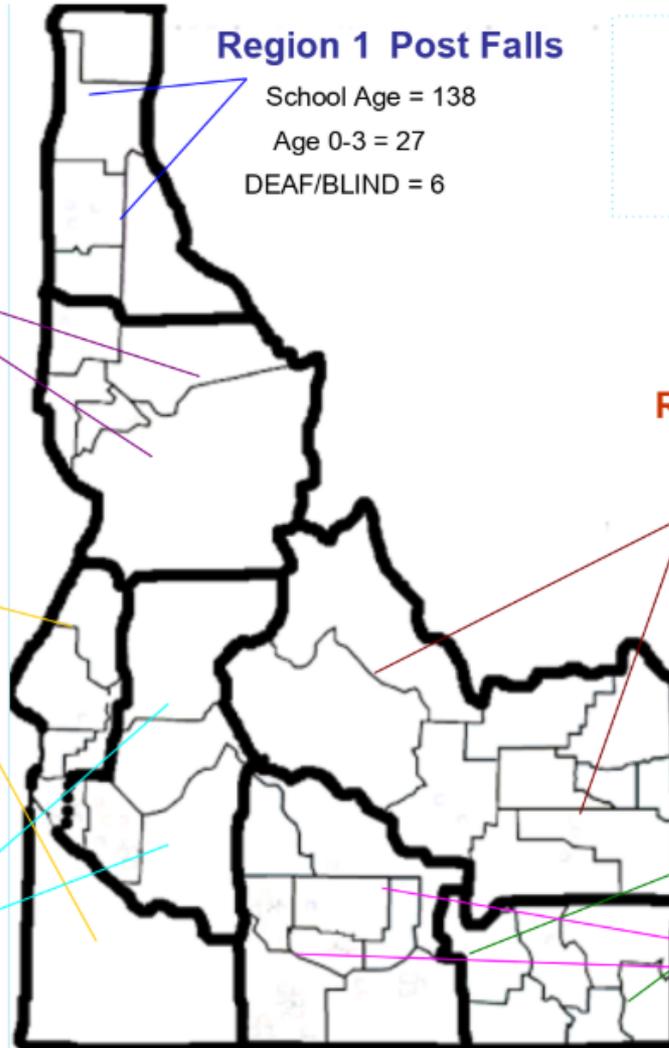
School Age = 117  
Age 0-3 = 15  
DEAF/BLIND = 1

#### Region 5 - Gooding

School Age = 210  
Age 0-3 = 20  
DEAF/BLIND = 2

#### State-Wide Totals

D/HH School Age = 1440  
Age 0-3 = 157  
DEAF/BLIND = 22  
1619 D/HH student-clients



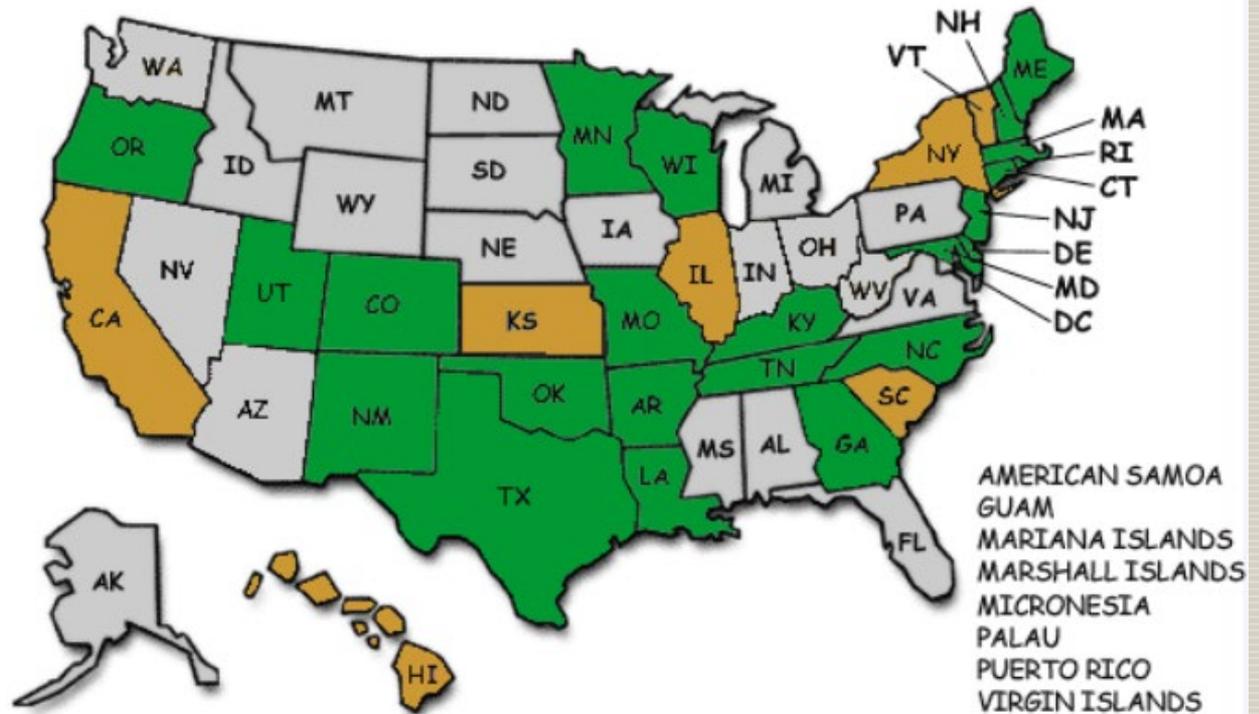
# 10. Collaborate with States Like Yours



- Other Red States: Utah, Texas, Georgia, Florida, Oregon etc...
- What success have they had?
- Use sites like NCHAM/EHDI to get current information

## Enacted Hearing Aid Legislation

- Legislation in Progress
- Legislation in Place
- No Legislation



## [EHDI State Legislation](https://www.infanthearing.org/legislation/hearingaid.html)

<https://www.infanthearing.org/legislation/hearingaid.html>

## FISCAL NOTE, 85TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 29, 2017

**TO:** Honorable Larry Phillips, Chair, House Committee on Insurance

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB490** by Anderson, Rodney (Relating to health benefit plan coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for certain individuals.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

**No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

The bill would amend the Insurance Code relating to health benefit plan coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants for certain individuals.

It is assumed that all duties and responsibilities necessary to implement the provisions of the bill would have no significant fiscal impact and could be accomplished utilizing existing staff and resources, based on information reported by the Texas Department of Insurance, Employees Retirement System, Teacher Retirement System, The University of Texas System Administration, and Texas A&M University System Administration.

### **Local Government Impact**

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

### **Source Agencies:**

**LBB Staff:** UP, AG, AM, TSI

# 11. Testify Confidently



- Know your audience
- Have a team of constants
- Plan out testimonies for appropriate hearings
- Respond to Representative concerns - listen
- Initially hesitant to bring up speech component
- Families vs. Professionals -
  - technical details/fine tuning
- Review parliamentary procedure





# 12. Media

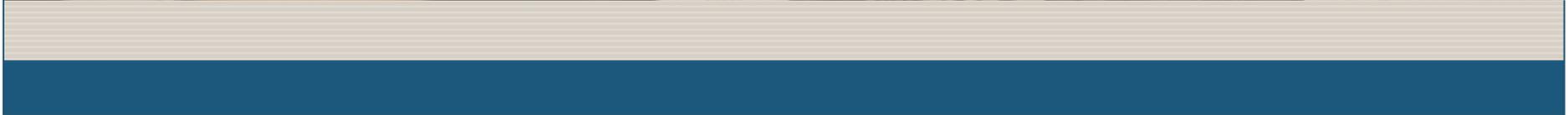


- Get the media involved
- Use social media
- Representatives use media as campaign tool



Media Coverage

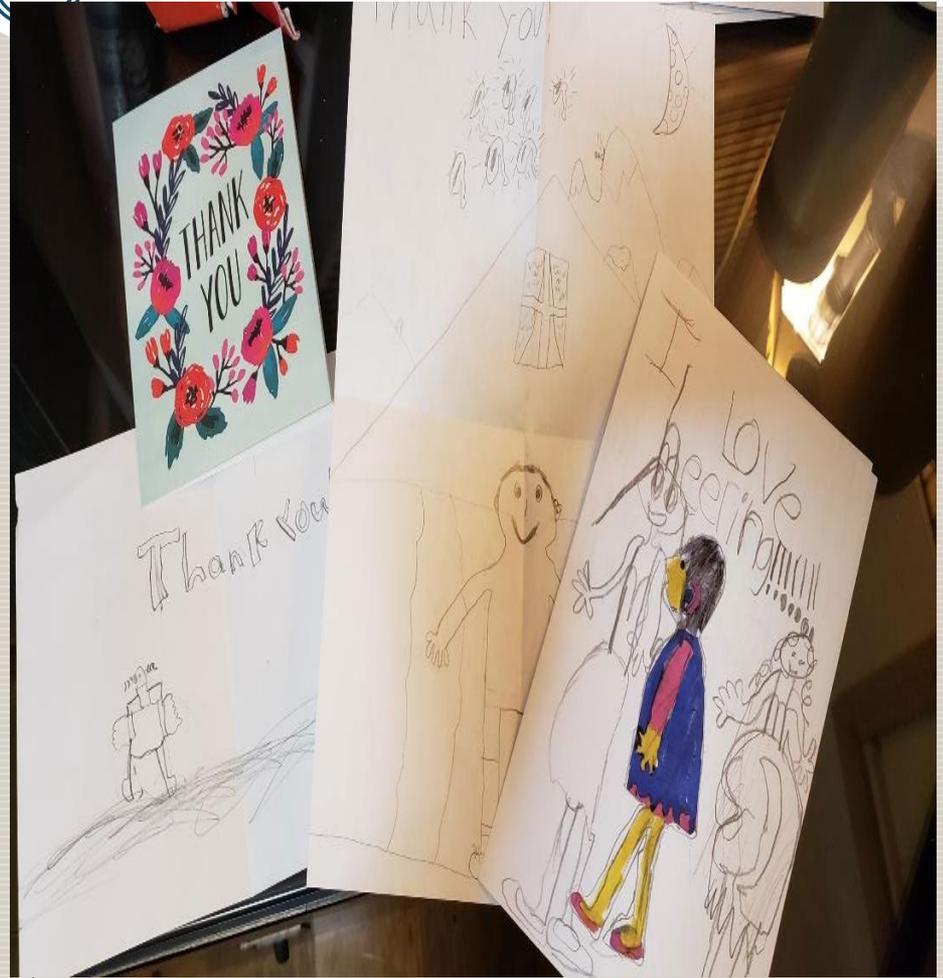
KIVITV News Clip





# 13. Always Express Gratitude

- Be gracious during meetings and testimonies
- Write hand written cards, send flowers



With Greatest Admiration,  
Idaho Hands & Voices  
Kat Ross & Lesa Cole

Dear Ilana ~  
We could not be more grateful to you for your service to all deaf and hard of hearing families in Idaho. You have made a positive impact in so many lives! Thank you for seeing this through to the end!



Ilana Rubel  
February 5 · 🌐



Just when I thought it was not possible to love our hearing aid advocate moms any more than I already do, I found these flowers on my desk. Thank you Lesa Coleman, Kat Ross and Idaho Hands and Voices!

👍❤️ 178

6 Comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Mike Hranac More than well deserved. Thanks for your passion and diligence. You make us all proud. Loves. 🍷👓👓👓

Like Reply 1w

👍 1



Jason Singleton Rubel you so rock

Like Reply 1w

👍 2

↳ Ilana Rubel replied · 1 Reply



Michelle Williams Wilson Well Deserved!!! Glad they are spoiling you.

Like Reply 1w

👍 1



Lori Wright Great work!

Like Reply 1w

👍 2



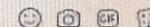
Lesa Coleman Small token from Idaho Families whose children have hearing loss! We greatly appreciate your service!!

Like Reply 1w

👍❤️ 3



Write a comment...



# We Can Meet



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Thank you and good luck!!

