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To Whom it May concern

I am writing to ask for your support of the proposed legislation designed to include providing notice of the benefits of technology that provides a direct connection between hearing aids and assistive listening systems that includes audio switch (telecoil) technology in the Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices Act

Until my retirement as a professor of audiology at the University of Florida I stressed the increased functionality of audio switch technology and the many benefits it provided to hearing aid users with my students. I was aware that many hearing care professionals do not counsel their clients in this technology so, while president of the American Academy of Audiology (2011), I was responsible for that national professional association undertaking a national campaign to raise awareness and availability of audio switch technology in cooperation with the Hearing Loss association of America on whose board of trustees I now serve.

People with even the best of hearing aids and/or cochlear implants have substantial challenges in understanding public address systems, conversations, alerting systems, information, etc. Audio switch technology, along with various forms of hearing loops, enables people with hearing loss to hear speech and other sounds regardless if there is significant noise in the background and/or distance from the speaker. The availability of such technology in hearing devices, coupled with the many venues that have been equipped with hearing loops in New Mexico (or that provide neck loops for their Infra Red or FM assistive listening systems) such as churches, community/senior centers, performing arts halls, state government/municipal buildings, courtrooms, Veterans Affairs hospitals, and private homes, enables New Mexico citizens who experience hearing loss to participate fully in activities in those facilities.

By requiring that hearing aid dispensers and audiologists counsel their clients in this Americans with Disabilities (ADA) endorsed technology you would help unlock access to desired sounds for many New Mexicans who have hearing aids or cochlear implants but may not have been provided with or trained in the use of this technology. Thus, I urge you to support the proposed changes in the New Mexico Speech Language Pathology, Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensing Practices requirements, adding New Mexico to the growing list of states with such regulations in force that includes Arizona, Florida, New York, Rhode Island and your neighboring state of Utah.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Patricia B. Kricos'.

Patricia B. Kricos, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus, University of Florida