February 28, 2025
Honorable Missy Irvin
Arkansas Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committee
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

Sent Via Email: Missy.Irvin@senate.ar.gov; clint.penzo@senate.ar.gov

Dear Chairperson Irvin,

On behalf of the American Academy of Audiology, the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists, I want to share with you the benefits of SB 118.

This legislation focuses on efficiency and reducing barriers to patients' access to timely, coordinated, and effective care, particularly in underserved and rural areas**.** Under SB 118, audiologists would be authorized to order necessary imaging, cultures, and bloodwork testing to support a streamlined referral process. This enhanced process could result in the elimination of unnecessary office visits and the development of faster diagnoses and treatment plans.

Audiologists are the primary healthcare professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat, and manage hearing loss and balance disorders in individuals of all ages, from infants to older adults. The audiologic evaluation is the first step in determining if a need exists for further medical intervention and referral. Through SB 118, the audiologist could order necessary testing to ensure that the consulting provider has critical diagnostic information needed to move forward in determining a treatment plan.

The American Academy of Audiology recognizes the need to modernize outdated statutes and regulations that stymie the practice of audiology and its evolution to meet the needs of patients. Efforts at the federal and state levels to remove barriers and expand access are critical to supporting audiologists to practice at the top of their license. SB 118 prioritizes patient care by ensuring full access to comprehensive hearing and balance healthcare services in the most efficient way.

Sincerely,

Patricia Gaffney. AuD, MPH
President