

To the Vermont House Health Care committee.

My Name is Tim Arsenault, and I am both the elected Town Clerk and the Town Moderator in Vernon. I have also worked as a Broadcaster since 1973 at radio stations WKVT and WTSA in Brattleboro, and WCFR in Springfield as a news reporter and newscaster. I was inducted into the Vermont Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2014. When I reached my mid 50's, roughly a decade ago, I began to have noticeable hearing problems, having a hard time hearing conversations in crowds, and having trouble distinguishing consonants in speech. When I was elected as Town Clerk in 2016, it became even more noticeable so I took the step of getting a hearing test. I found my high and mid range hearing were severely damaged, with more profound loss on the right side. My specialist sent me for an MRI to be sure I did not have a tumor that might have been causing the loss. Thankfully, my hearing did not require surgery but is in large part able to be corrected by hearing aides.

I was able to secure a one thousand dollar grant from the Vermont Division of vocational rehabilitation, something they called an employability grant. Still, I was left with the expense of 23 hundred dollars to pay for hearing aids, to be able to continue working in my chosen field. With little other choice, I put the balance on a credit card and paid both the remaining balance and the interest fees. Even though both my wife and I were employed full time, it placed a severe burden on our household budget.

I am asking you consider approval of H 266, as I consider myself a middle aged, middle class Vermonter, who has been more fortunate than most. My quality of life, and my on the job skills have improved immeasurably. With Vermont's needs for skilled workers, and for our desire to improve the quality of life for our citizens, passage of this bill would mean so much to our families, our friends and our neighbors.

Thank for your time and consideration.