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Testimony of

Connecticut ENT Society

Before the Public Health Committee

In Support Of:

Proposed Bill No. 6214 "An Act Concerning Hearing Loss in Young Children"

The Connecticut State ENT Society, an organization that represents the vast majority of practicing otolaryngologists (ear, nose and throat) in our state, supports proposed bill 6214.

Recent studies estimate that 16 percent of teenagers, or approximately 6 million children, suffer from permanent noise-induced hearing loss. The ever expanding use of personal audio devices with direct delivery of noise in the ear canal (ear buds) at an earlier age is the main cause of this disturbing trend. The rock concert-attending baby-boomer generation already has 26% more hearing loss than the senior population.

Unfortunately most hearing tests performed in pediatrician and family practice offices are not sophisticated enough to catch the early signs of NIHL. This bill proposes that information regarding NIHL be disseminated to parents of young children at a critical time for prevention. The possibility of early education of this issue may allow physicians to warn patients about the risks of hearing loss before it is too late. In addition, we support having a hearing test area or field on any universal child health form to be developed by the state. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the forms development if the state chooses to go forward with HB 5110 An Act Concerning the Development and Use of a Universal Child Health Form.

In summary, as otolaryngologists we are acutely aware of the physical and societal effects of NIHL in children and adolescents. Bill 6214 acknowledges the fact that real prevention starts with education, and we would support any measure that seeks to improve awareness of this issue for both physicians and the young patients we treat.

Respectfully submitted,