

To Whom It May Concern:

I am distressed to find that the rights of deaf and hard-of-hearing children are being so cavalierly dismissed in the rush to auction off the frequency bands that have been set aside for use with the FM systems used with our children. This action must not occur. For many decades, FM systems have helped deaf children in learning to use their residual hearing in self-contained classrooms for deaf children. With the help of new technologies (such as digital hearing aids and cochlear implants), more and more deaf children are being mainstreamed, and FM systems are a critical component to making the most of a mainstream education.

As an example of how critical FM systems are in the mainstream, I can cite the case of one of our 5-year-olds who is in a mainstream class. He uses an FM very successfully. One day, his regular teacher had to leave early, and another teacher had to take over. The 5-year-old immediately burst into tears. When they finally calmed him down, he was able to tell them that the leaving teacher had not transferred the transmitter/microphone to the teacher taking over. He was quite happy after that was done. He did not feel comfortable even for a minute without being able to hear what the teacher was saying.

Imagine that you couldn't hear suddenly, and how devastated you would feel, and you might get some small sense of how our children depend on those FM frequency bands.

We must protect the frequency bands that serve our deaf children now and for the future. As technology becomes more advanced, more and more children will be needing FM-type systems, and more and more teachers will be asked to use them. We need those frequency bands to keep our children tuned into their educational opportunities.

Sincerely,

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