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## Action Alert!

### Show Your Support for the Over- the-Counter Hearing Aid Act

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The Hearing Loss Association of America has embarked on a campaign to support new legislation that, if passed, will change the face of hearing health care in America. And you can be part of it.

On March 21, U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), reintroduced legislation (Senate bill S. 670) to make hearing aids for those with mild to moderate hearing loss available over the counter (OTC). Senators Warren and Grassley first introduced the bill last December and have now reintroduced it for 2017.

A companion bill (H.R. 1652), led by Representatives Joe Kennedy III (D-Mass.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), was also introduced in the House. Co-sponsors of the House bill (at press time) include Representatives Don Bacon (R-Neb.), Earl “Buddy” Carter (R-Ga.), Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC), James P. McGovern (D-Mass.), and Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.).

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to create a new category of over-the-counter hearing aids and remove unnecessary barriers to getting hearing aids.

We need your help in supporting Senators Warren and Grassley to get this groundbreaking piece of legislation passed!

If the “Warren-Grassley bill” is enacted, the immediate benefit will of course be for those whom these new devices are intended—people with mild to moderate hearing loss who might otherwise be unable to purchase that first hearing aid because it’s too expensive or because the process is so confusing.

But, we also expect to see greater technology innovation and market competition. While we are already seeing signs of this it will blossom once the market bursts with new devices. We believe this will also benefit the traditional hearing aid market. A higher level of innovation and competition will lower the cost for all hearing aids, much like we have seen in the consumer electronics industry in recent years.

You can help us in this effort by taking action! Contact your Congressmen and let them know you support the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017. Here’s how:

1. To find out who represents you in the House go to [house.gov/representatives/find](http://house.gov/representatives/find).
2. To find your Senator go to [senate.gov/senators/contact](http://senate.gov/senators/contact).
3. Once you have found them, there will be links to their website or directly to a contact page. You will be asked information about where you live and what topic you are writing about. Choose “Health” from the dropdown list.
4. You can fill out the form by copying and pasting one of the sample letters we have drafted. (You can find those on our website at the address below.) Or you can write your story in your own words. Either way, send a message to Congress showing your support of the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017!

Your letters will make a world of difference to legislators who have no background in hearing loss. They don’t have any idea what it means to be without a hearing aid. And many don’t even know that Medicare will not cover the cost of hearing aids. You have the opportunity to be heard and to educate legislators, which will certainly give this legislation a good chance of being passed!

We have created a dedicated section of our website for this initiative that contains more information. You can find that at [hearingloss.org/content/call-to-action-otc](http://hearingloss.org/content/call-to-action-otc). **HLM**