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## Congress of the United States

November 6, 2014

Committee on Natural Resources  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Mineral Resources

Committee on Education and  
the Workforce

Founder and Co-Chair,  
Research & Development Caucus

Co-Chair,  
Historic Preservation Caucus

Mr. Daniel Berke  
President  
New Jersey Association of Hearing Health Professionals  
132 West State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608-1102

Dear Mr. Berke:

Thank you for contacting me in support of H.R. 3508, a bill to address hearing aid specialists for veterans. I appreciate hearing from you and apologize for the delay in my reply.

As your voice in the U.S. House of Representatives, I always strive to represent my constituents' concerns and interests and to provide personal service to them. I truly value your input and suggestions on the issues before the House. In a representative government such as ours, it is essential that I know what you are thinking in order to do my job.

For the past three years, the foremost service-connected disabilities for veterans were hearing loss and tinnitus. Providing coordinated hearing health care can dramatically improve the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of veterans. However, because of increasing demand for hearing health services, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is unable to meet the needs of these veterans in a timely manner.

The demand for audiology services is growing at a rate of nearly 10 percent per year. Follow up services, minor repairs and adjustments are also subject to long wait times, resulting in many veterans not fully utilizing the devices they receive. I've heard from veterans in my district that are traveling 90 miles one way just to get a hearing aid adjusted by the VA.

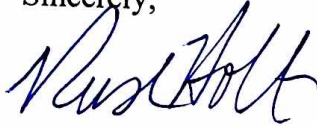
Hearing aid specialists are trained to assess, dispense, fit, adjust and repair hearing instruments. Major insurance plans utilize these professionals in the dispensing of hearing aids, allowing doctors of audiology to focus on clinical cases they are uniquely qualified to treat. Hearing aid specialists are educated professionals who have undergone lengthy training and accreditation processes.

H.R. 3508, the Veterans Hearing Access Improvement Act, allows the VA to utilize hearing aid specialists alongside audiologists to help fill the need for services. With H.R. 3508, veterans should experience shorter wait times for appointments, have access to more follow-up hearing health care, and enjoy shorter driving distances to see qualified hearing personnel.

You may be pleased to know that I am a cosponsor of H.R. 3508, which has been referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. Should this bill move out of committee and on to the House floor for a vote, it will receive my full support.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. To learn more about my work in Congress on taxes and other issues related to the economy, please visit my website: <http://holt.house.gov>. I look forward to hearing from you again about this and other issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rush Holt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "H".

RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress

RH/smg