

## **Testimony of Janice Lintz before the National Council on Disability Public Facilities and Transportation Public Comment**

- Buildings (accessibility of buildings, locker rooms, weight rooms, exercise areas)
  - Fitness equipment (exercise machines, weight machines)
  - Exercise classes (integrated classes, modifications)
  - Swimming facilities (pool lifts, entry ramps)
  - Other accessibility comments on private or federally financed recreation facilities
  - The accessibility of rental cars (reservations, hand-controls, cars available for rental)
  - The accessibility of hotel shuttles or other public shuttles
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Good Afternoon Council Members

All views expressed are my own and do not reflect the position of the Department where I work.

My name is Janice Lintz, and I am an advocate for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. As a mother of a daughter with hearing loss, I am deeply committed to ensuring that those who are hard of hearing have access to sound in all the venues mentioned including ground transportation and hotel shuttles.

Historically, hearing access has primarily been achieved through visual representation, such as captions, or through qualified interpretation and sign language. While these methods are valuable, it's essential to recognize that many individuals with hearing loss desire the ability to hear sound directly.

The reliance on technologies like induction loops, which are t-coil compatible and utilize both ears without the need for conspicuous devices, offers the only available solution. Unlike other assistive devices, induction loops provide privacy and personal freedom, aligning with the principles outlined in various Executive Orders.

Unfortunately, individuals who are hard of hearing have long been marginalized and underserved, as there is currently no political or lobbying organization specifically dedicated to hard of hearing advocacy, nor any organization representing children in this regard.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge that there are approximately 72.88 million Americans according to NIH living with hearing loss, all of whom require access to various facilities and services. Fortunately, the implementation of induction loops is feasible and already exists in numerous locations globally. (Please scroll down.)

Additionally, it's important to temper expectations regarding emerging technologies. Auracast, for example, is at least five years away from full implementation, if it proves successful. Similar to the gradual adoption of electric cars, we have yet to witness full implementation to eliminate gas stations. These developments underscore the need for practical, accessible solutions like induction loops in the interim.

Thank you for your time and consideration.