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November 28, 2016

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20150

Dear Senator Warren and Senator Grassley:

AARP is pleased to endorse the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2016, which would implement recommendations from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology's (PCAST) and the National Academies to help the millions of Americans affected by hearing impairment.

Your bill, by making certain types of hearing aids available over the counter, requiring the FDA to issue regulations on this new category of over-the-counter hearing aids, and requiring the FDA to update its draft guidance on Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs), among other reforms, would help create a more consumer-friendly market for hearing devices.

At AARP, part of our mission is ensuring older Americans continue to lead active and engaging lives. A person's ability to hear greatly affects how they interact with other people, loved ones, and the environment around them. Difficulty hearing creates a barrier to social interaction, and can have a negative health impact. Roughly 40 percent of the over-60 population experiences hearing loss. Unfortunately, hearing aid usage by those experiencing hearing loss is very low, with only about 20 percent of those affected using a hearing aid. A significant factor in the lack of utilization is the cost of hearing aids – which average over \$2,000 per ear. Cost and other factors, such as access and social stigma, prevent people from using these life-altering technologies.

AARP believes your bill will improve consumers' access to affordable hearing technologies that can improve their daily living. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Andrew Scholnick of our Government Affairs staff at ascholnick@aarp.org or 202-434-3770.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs

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