My name is Julie Nadrchal. I’m writing this letter in regards to bill HSB 542 as a grandmother of a child with a disability and school social worker at East Sac Community School District.

**As a grandparent:**

My 3 1/2 year old grandson was born profoundly deaf and has bilateral cochlear implants. AEA reached out to my son and daughter-in-law to assist them as new parents of a deaf child. Today, our grandson is on track with his peers in all areas of his development, in part because of the AEA services he received in Early Access. Our grandson is receiving support of Section 504 plan in preschool and audiology services from the AEA.  The AEA audiologist helps train his teachers on how to use his cochlear implants, and to help ensure that he has access to his education. This bill will take away the support of an audiologist to children like my grandson who is not receiving special education services, but will always need the support of an audiologist in the school to access his education. It would be difficult and costly for the school district to try to provide these services.

**As a School Social Worker:**

As a small school district, we depend on AEA for services that as a school district we cannot provide to our students or school staff. For special education services, they provide support to our students and special education staff. Media services have amazing resources such as lending library, digital resources including eBooks, reference materials, etc. Also this school year our professional development is provided by our AEA school psychologist. Her presentations are in person and she is available weekly to help our staff implement strategies in classrooms. This bill will take away the media services with all the resources our district uses and we will not have our school psychologist supporting all the staff in the building. She will just help with special education.

I have been working at East Sac Community School District for a 1 ½ years and prior to that with Prairie Lakes AEA for 20 years. I have experience working in larger school districts such as Fort Dodge in our Prairie Lakes and also in many smaller school districts. Our schools do appreciate AEA services: special education staff, media services, and professional development. The school districts in the Prairie Lakes area do not have the funds or people to fill in positions that will be taken away with this bill. We need the services and support locally, not just in Des Moines.

**Closing:**

One more to thing to think about, I have had to go to different districts throughout my career at AEA to support students and staff after deaths of students and staff. Recently Heartland AEA staff were there for the school community in Perry. This is the local support AEA’s and their staff do. This bill will take that support away since AEA staff can only work with special education.

Please vote to oppose the bill that will affect Area Education Agency Services: HSB 542. In the long run, it will cost the tax payers more money and will result in fewer services for those in need.

Sincerely,

Julie Nadrchal, LISW

School Social Worker East Sac Community School District