

Here is my statement for the March 31 hearing on the above subject.

I am Frank Nemshick, Jr., a resident of Lower Paxton Township, and president of the Greater Harrisburg Chapter of the PA Society for the Advancement of the Deaf. The PSAD is a state association of deaf persons, founded in 1881. We advocate for the rights and needs of deaf and hard of hearing persons.

I have been totally deaf since the age of 8 through spinal meningitis. I retired almost 20 years ago after 38 years as a statistician in the PA Dept. of Labor and Industry. For over 60 years..I have been closely acquainted and involved with many deaf persons, on their behalf.

Our association and deaf people in general support the intent of the law for integrated housing for people with disabilities -- but we are upset when laws are used to force deaf persons to live with hearing people who cannot communicate with us. That perpetuates deaf persons' isolation and hinders their social interaction.

Everyone should have the option to live where he/she wishes. Deaf persons need facilities that meet their needs, such as videophones, flashing doorbell, phone, and emergency lights, and residents, staff and security personnel fluent in sign language and who understand the needs, abilities, and culture of persons who are deaf... or who are severely hard of hearing.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.