



Arizona Commission
for the deaf and the hard of hearing

POLICY NEWS & UPDATES

[PLAIN TRANSCRIPT HERE](#)

**55th Arizona Legislature
January 7, 2022**

The 55th Arizona Legislature-Second Regular Session officially begins Monday, January 10 at 12pm with the State of the State Address by Governor Ducey. The address will be given in person at the State House of Representatives. This will be the eight State of the State address by the Governor. A rarity for an Arizona governor to do so, as many have never stayed around long enough to give an address for every year of their term in office.

In other news...

This week, Leadership in both Chambers, Senate President Fann and Speaker of the House, Rusty Bowers announced in a press release that ALL committee hearings and floor proceedings in both the House and Senate will be captioned via online. ACDHH is happy to see the Arizona Legislature continue to move forward in ensuring access for all of the 1.1 million Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Arizonans in the legislative proceedings. To view the press release, click [here](#).

For all in person accommodations, the process remains the same. To request accommodations, contact the Senate at 602-926-5319 or the House at 602-926-3032.

Lastly...

The AZ Legislature will be resuming all in person activities for its business this year. At this time, all rules related to COVID restrictions have been removed. It is our understanding this means that virtual testimony will not be allowed. If we hear of anything different, we will let you know through the weekly Updates and Alerts.

FEDERAL UPDATES

OVER THE COUNTER HEARING AIDS-DEADLINE LOOMING

In October, the Federal Drug and Food Administration (FDA) issued [notice](#) of their proposed rules establishing a new category of OTC hearing aids.

Additionally, the proposed rules, amends existing rules that apply to hearing aids and state regulation of hearing aids. The public is allowed and encouraged to submit comments on the proposed rules.

Here are the proposed rules:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-22473>

If you would like to take action and file your comments on the proposed rules, you can!

To submit comments either electronically or written/paper statements, follow the instructions on the proposed rules link above.

The deadline to submit public comments is January 18, 2022.

Background: In 2017, Congress passed the bi-partisan Over-The-Counter Hearing Aid Act and was signed into law as part of the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017. The law requires the FDA to create a new category of hearing aids that individuals can purchase over-the-counter (OTC) and issue regulations OTC manufacturers must follow.

[ACDHH Position on OTC Hearing Aids](#)

FEDERAL BUDGET

In late December, talks related to the Build Back Better Act, also known as the "soft or human infrastructure" bill "imploded". The bill, [HR 5376](#) which was introduced in last September, was expected to have a full vote and pass in early December. Unfortunately, with a slim majority in the Senate of Democrats, the bill came to a screeching halt.

We will continue to monitor the status of the bill and any movement as it relates to specific language impacting the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities.

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