

**THE BILL WILKERSON HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER**  
**NASHVILLE 4, TENNESSEE**

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December 2, 1958

Honorable John E. Fogarty  
House Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Congressman Fogarty:

Since you are the greatest humanitarian in Congress, and have more insight into the needs of our citizens, I am writing to propose and request that you introduce a bill for the training of professional workers on the graduate level in the hearing and speech field. Such a measure is urgently needed for, as you know, with the possible exception of orthopedic conditions, hearing and speech defects handicap the greatest number of people; and more children are handicapped with hearing and speech defects than from any other cause. In previous correspondence with you, I have shown the great need for professional personnel in this field due not only to shortage, but also to the poor training of 50% of those persons now in this field.

Though a person handicapped with a hearing and speech defect makes no dramatic appearance, the greatest need in this country for rehabilitating handicapped persons lies with these people. It is true that the nation has several programs of this type which are totally inadequate and do not cover the entire field. It is my understanding that the Department of Education's work begins with the six-year old, and that the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation begins its work at age sixteen, and only for those who can be vocationally rehabilitated. The proposed program should include professional training for rehabilitation workers, not necessarily vocational, teachers, research personnel, etc., for all of our people, regardless of age.

I am enclosing a copy of a bill which I had drawn by Tennessee's Attorney General, which will give you some idea of the type of program which I have in mind. I am sure that you will make many changes in the bill, and I feel that it will be a good bill with your changes. A year or two will be required for the development of a sound program. During the developmental period, \$250,000 annually should be a sufficient appropriation.

I discussed this matter with the previous Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Honorable Marion Folsom, and while the administration did not support such a measure, he did state that he would not oppose such a bill.

I am cognizant of the great work that you have done in the hearing and speech field, and your accomplishments have added greatly to research programs, rehabilitation, and teaching potential. Likewise, your mental health bill as well as other measures which you have introduced have made America a better place in which to live. As a citizen, I am profoundly grateful to you for all of this.

I shall be pleased to come to Washington to discuss this matter with you at any time. While I have neither the position nor the ability to do your work, I will be pleased to cooperate and do footwork for you in any manner which you may suggest. I can obtain outstanding men in this field to testify before your committee if you so desire.

My kindest personal regards and best wishes are extended to you.

Yours very faithfully,

*W. W. Wilkerson, Jr.*  
W. W. Wilkerson, Jr. M. D.

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*Agree  
Think something along this  
line should be done. Job well  
attended, legislation  
should emphasize to  
not happen*