Committee members;

My name is Jenny Carmack. I am a deaf blind Missouri resident. I am writing to urge you to move HB 1308 forward. This bill addresses funding for the SSP program that so many deaf blind Missourians rely on for our independence. The SSP (Special Support Provider) program allows us to travel, shop, access medical care, interact within our communities, and more. Currently there are many deaf blind Missourians who are on a waiting list to receive this service due to a lack of funds to serve an adequate number of people.

For me, when I go to a store and request assistance from an employee, it can be difficult to communicate with them which is frustrating for me and the employee. A SSP is trained to effectively communicate with a person who is deaf blind. A few years ago, as part of my college graduation, I used the assistance of a SSP to provide information to me during a presentation. The SSP stood beside me and through different signals traced on my back they were able to communicate if a person I was presenting to was pointing, nodding, speaking to me, or walked away. This gave me the ability to seamlessly communicate with the participants. Thanks to my ability to have access to this program I received high marks on my presentation. There are numerous stories like this from deaf blind people across our state, but there are so many who are waiting to receive this very valuable service.

Again, I sincerely ask that you act to pass HB 1308 out of this committee for the benefit of many Missourians.

Thank you,

Jenny Carmack