

# The State of Washington



## Proclamation

*WHEREAS*, approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population, including more than 1.2 million Washington residents, experience hearing loss; and

*WHEREAS*, approximately 60 percent of people with hearing loss are in the workforce or in school and experience challenges there; and

*WHEREAS*, almost 15 percent of school-age children ages 6-19 have some degree of hearing loss; and

*WHEREAS*, many individuals do not get treatment for hearing loss because of a perceived stigma or embarrassment; and

*WHEREAS*, untreated hearing loss can lead to communication challenges, isolation, depression, loss of functionality in the workplace, reduced earnings, increased falls, and possible progression to dementia; and

*WHEREAS*, the COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for people with hearing loss to communicate when speakers wear masks; and

*WHEREAS*, Washingtonians can help avoid these consequences by getting an audiology exam, following up with recommended treatments, and protecting their hearing by wearing ear protection when in loud settings; and

*WHEREAS*, businesses and organizations in Washington state can support those with hearing loss by using microphones and assistive devices at public meetings and events, making captions a standard practice in meetings and appointments, including telehealth visits, and ensuring that entertainment, civic, and sports venues have hearing access accommodations and informative signage available; and

*WHEREAS*, the month of May has been designated as Better Hearing Month for over 75 years;

*NOW, THEREFORE*, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim May 2023 as

### *Better Hearing Month*

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee

