**Sample SDSLHA Member Legislator Email Template – General Contact**

*Dear Representative or Senator [Last Name] (find your legislator for your South Dakota hometown or the city where your job is if you are not from South Dakota below is a link to find legislators and their contact links.* <https://sdlegislature.gov/Legislators/Find>

I am a constituent and a/*an audiologist/speech-language pathologist/speech-language pathology assistant* from *[city or legislative district]*. I would like to provide you with some information about the importance of services for individuals with speech, language, hearing, balance, and related disorders in South Dakota.

Audiologists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, provide vital screening, evaluation, and treatment services for South Dakotans of all ages to ensure that all people achieve and maintain the highest quality of life possible. There are approximately 93 licensed audiologists, 564 licensed speech-language pathologists, and 76 licensed speech-language pathology assistants in SD. We work in health care, education, and private practice settings with individuals of all ages. Shortages of audiology and speech-language pathology professionals exist across all work settings and all geographic areas in South Dakota.

5 – 10% of the U.S. population has a communication disorder. This costs the U.S. approximately $154 – 186 billion annually. Approximately 5% of children in schools have an articulation/speech disorder, almost 7% of individuals have a language impairment, and approximately 37.5 million Americans had difficulty hearing. Here is a helpful handout with information about identifying the signs of communication disorders <https://identifythesigns.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/ASHA_Identify-the-Signs_Fact-Sheet-Final.pdf>

 <https://youtu.be/zhp83mZ6bLI> This video emphasizes the importance of early detection of communication disorders.

Provide a personal statement that may include:

* Why you chose this career
* The importance of helping people with communication disorders
* An experience you had with someone who has a communication disorder

**Information/links you could include**

* Resources <https://identifythesigns.org/resources/>
* What an SLP does <https://www.asha.org/public/who-are-speech-language-pathologists/>
* What an SLPA does <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/speech-language-pathology-assistants/>
* What an Audiologist Does <https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/>

I appreciate your support of legislation that improves access to South Dakotans with communication and related disorders. If you would like to visit more with me about these issues, please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX at \_\_\_\_\_your email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. You can find more information at [www.sdslha.org](http://www.sdslha.org).

Sincerely, [name ][address]