

February 13, 2023

To: House Committee on Education

From: *Elena Kingston, Speech Language Pathologist*

RE: Support for HB 2959

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee—

My name is Elena Kingston and I am here today as a Speech Language Pathologist of six years, and I am here to express my support for House Bill 2959.

As a trained health professional in school, I am both licensed and practice within school systems and settings that can sometimes be in conflict with one another. We believe our students deserve the best possible educational journey at every turn and we know that the barriers that provide for these conflicting rules to our licensure are systemic, so we know the solutions will take long-term commitment and dedication.

In my six years in the schools, I have frequently experienced push-back from classroom teachers and building and district administrators about whether a student should be evaluated, made eligible or be dismissed from services. In addition, I have experienced push-back about the number of service minutes and type of service delivery I am recommending (e.g. push in, pull out or consultation). When my clinical judgment and expertise is not respected, students are not being served in an evidence based manner that aligns with our scope of practice and state and federal laws relating to FAPE and LRE. In addition, it requires a great deal of my time and resources to compile data and evidence to present to teams that disagree with my clinical decision making. This takes away time from providing individualized services to my students. It is imperative that our work as SLPs is respected and treated for what it is— a highly skilled professional with extensive specialized education.

One clear concern expressed by members from all licensed professionals working in an education setting is the disconnect between requirements of licensure and the realities of practice in schools. That is why we need HB 2959, which will create a Task Force to examine the scope of practice for each type of licensed health professional in schools, establish criteria to help define when procedures are inconsistent with scope of practice, and provide recommendations for alignment.

Thank you for your time today and I encourage the committee to vote YES on HB 2959.

Elena Kingston

Speech Language Pathologist

Corvallis, OR