

To: House Committee on Education
From: Katrina Viers, Speech-Language Pathologist
RE: Support for HB 2959

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

My name is Katrina Viers. I am here today as a speech-language pathologist, and I am here to express my support for House Bill 2959.

As a trained health professional in early childhood special education, 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.

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. Other professionals, such as occupational therapists and teachers, take on the SLP role, especially in early childhood settings. Speech-language pathologists may casemanage students with behavior needs. Taking on IEPs and IFSPs which have behavior goals is outside of our scope. 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.

Katrina Viers, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
Multnomah County