

To: House Committee on Education
From: Jenny Callero, MS, CCC-SLP
RE: Support for HB 2959

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

My name is Jenny Callero and I am here today as a Speech Language Pathologist of 13 years, 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 early childhood/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 cause these conflicting rules to our licensure are systemic, so we know the solutions will take long-term commitment and dedication.

One of the barriers is that caseloads in early childhood are too high for effective delivery of services required by IDEA. This has an immediate and direct impact on children. They are not being provided the most effective services and this impacts their ability to communicate and learn. It also impacts health care professionals' ability to train other professionals and caregivers, such as in using visual/verbal strategies and Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) to support safety, communication, and progress on IFSP goals in all settings. This also leads to other professionals taking on the role of the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) without the education and/or training necessary to make appropriate decisions regarding assessment and treatment, which creates inequalities within our education system when some students are receiving specially designed instruction by a trained SLP and others are being provided services by professionals trained in other areas of expertise (OT, teacher). Without the necessary training, students may not be receiving services that are aligned with evidence based practice and current research. The opposite is also true - SLPs are often asked to provide direct instruction for IFSP goals that are outside our scope of practice. Again, this creates issues with equity of service. It is difficult to argue that a teacher working on articulation is as equipped as an SLP or that an SLP working on fine motor is as equipped as an occupational therapist. This can greatly impact students and their progress on IFSP goals.

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.

Jenny Callero, MS, CCC-SLP (Speech Language Pathologist)
Multnomah County, OR

