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Legislative and Advocacy Co-Chair of the Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon  
Regarding: SB 5524  
February 11, 2025

Esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, the Board of the Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon, is writing to you today to strongly advocate for passing the Occupational Therapy Licensing Board's budget.

First, the primary mission of the Occupational Therapy Licensing Board (OTLB) is to safeguard the health and well-being of the public. By ensuring that only qualified and competent practitioners are licensed, OTLB acts as a protection mechanism for the public. Funding OTLB's budget is essential to maintaining high standards in our profession, such as ensuring that licensed practitioners meet their continuing education requirements, which, in turn, fosters public trust.

Moreover, a robust budget allows the board to be more responsive to the concerns and needs of practitioners. By investing in resources and support systems, OTLB can address occupational therapists' challenges in their practice and enhance the quality of care provided to clients. Several of us at the Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon have interacted directly with OTLB when concerns have arisen about employers requiring occupational therapy practitioners to work outside their area of expertise or scope of practice. OTLB has been responsive and has sought input from experts. They could not have done this without proper funding.

Also, it's essential to emphasize customer service. The licensing process should be user-friendly and efficient, ensuring practitioners have support as they navigate the requirements. A well-allocated budget allows the board to implement staff training and develop systems prioritizing applicants' needs, making the licensing experience smoother for everyone involved.

Finally, a timely process for license approvals is vital for practitioners and the public. Delays in licensing can lead to gaps in service provision, negatively impacting those who rely on occupational therapy. It can also negatively impact the families of occupational therapy practitioners relying on income from employment requiring licensure. As a group of practitioners around the state, we praise OTLB for its customer service and timely license approvals.

In conclusion, passing the budget for the Occupational Therapy Licensing Board is not just an investment in our profession; it is an investment in the health and safety of the public. By prioritizing public protection, addressing practitioner needs, enhancing customer service, and ensuring a timely licensing process, they work closely with our organization to pave the way for a stronger, more effective occupational therapy community.

Thank you for considering this vital budget, and we urge you to support its passage.

Sincerely,

Julia R. Farrell, OTD, OTR/L, IBCLC  
Legislative and Advocacy Co-Chair of the Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon  
On behalf of the Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon Board