

Submitter: MacKenzie Smith  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2357

Written Testimony in Support of the Interstate Occupational Therapy Compact Bill

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Dear Legislative Members,

My name is MacKenzie and I am a licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP) with 4 years of experience working in an outpatient rehab setting. I am writing to express my strong support for the Interstate Occupational Therapy Compact bill. As a professional who frequently collaborates with occupational therapists (OTs) to provide comprehensive care for individuals with communication, feeding, and motor challenges, I recognize the immense benefits that this compact will offer to both practitioners and the communities they serve.

Occupational and Speech therapy plays a critical role in supporting individuals across the lifespan, particularly those with disabilities, developmental delays, and rehabilitation needs. Many of the children and adults I serve require both speech-language pathology and occupational therapy interventions to maximize their functional independence and quality of life. Unfortunately, barriers to OT/SLP licensure across state lines limit access to timely care, especially for individuals in rural and underserved communities. The OT Compact will help address this issue by allowing licensed professionals to provide services across participating states without unnecessary administrative burdens.

In my practice, I often work with families living in split households, with family living in my state of licensure AND neighboring states. Given that we live on the border of Oregon and Washington, this is not an uncommon occurrence. When a child or adult with complex needs stays with family in a neighboring state, they are often unable to receive care which can interrupt progress and create setbacks in their development or rehabilitation. The OT Compact will enable licensed therapists to continue providing services across state lines, ensuring that patients experience consistent and uninterrupted care.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of telehealth in expanding

service delivery, particularly for individuals who face challenges accessing in-person therapy. As an SLP, I have witnessed firsthand how telepractice has improved access to services for patients in remote areas. The OT Compact will allow therapists to provide telehealth services seamlessly across multiple states, increasing access for individuals who might otherwise go without care. Additionally, this compact will facilitate greater collaboration between speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and other allied health professionals who work as part of multidisciplinary teams across state lines.

Occupational therapy, like speech-language pathology, faces workforce shortages in many regions. By streamlining licensure processes and removing barriers for qualified professionals to work in multiple states, the OT Compact will help address staffing shortages in hospitals, schools, and rehabilitation centers. This will not only benefit therapists who seek mobility in their careers but also the patients and students who depend on their services.

As an SLP, I understand the value of professional compacts in ensuring high-quality, accessible care. The Interstate Occupational Therapy Compact will enhance service delivery, improve access to therapy, and support a more flexible and responsive healthcare system. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

Sincerely,  
MacKenzie Smith, MS, CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist