

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

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Javadi, Vice Chair Nelson, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you as a licensed speech language pathologist and an Oregonian to ask you to support HB 2357. This vital legislation will allow Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists to better serve all Oregon populations, including rural areas, areas close to state borders, and helps to ensure that every Oregonian has timely access to quality SLP and Audiology services.

The Audiology Speech Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) offers several benefits:

Improves continuity of care. I work at a community clinic and we serve patients in the state of Oregon and Washington. Many of our patients reside in low-resource regions that are not equipped with the services that we are fortunate to provide. We are strongly in need of participation in the interstate compact so that I can provide longitudinal care to patients, as needed. Virtual visits provide the ability to manage these patients across state lines and mitigates the need for expensive travel, housing, and time off work or school for both our patients and their caregivers.

Increases choice of audiology and speech-language pathology providers. In rural Clackamas County (and rural counties across the state) there are limited numbers of Speech Language Pathologists, this would allow patients to more easily access specialized SLP services such as voice or dyslexia specialties.

Facilitates alternate delivery methods (Telehealth). During the COVID-19 pandemic, I was asked to assist in cases of SLPs who lived in the Vancouver area and were unable to commute to Portland for in-person service delivery. It was a hardship and delayed services during a time of uncertainty that those SLPs were required to obtain a Washington State license before being able to serve public school students or adults via telepractice. By enacting legislation to join the compact, HB 2357 will allow for the use of telehealth technology to facilitate increased access to audiology and speech-language pathology services in situations such as this.

Simplifies/speeds up the current process. ASLP-IC requires that an audiologist and speech-language pathologist be licensed in their home state but allowed to practice in a remote state through a privilege to practice. This allows the home state to continue to regulate while allowing the remote state to know who is practicing in their state and in what capacity without requiring audiologists and speech-language pathologists to obtain and maintain a license in every ASLP-IC state.

HB 2357 offers a clear and organized path to improved patient care across state

lines. These impacts will especially impact rural and otherwise underserved patients in our communities. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support of this bill.

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