

Konrad Jackson

From: Annarose Miller <nolephlipper@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 9:26 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve as a speech pathologist for Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. I have worked at my school for 16 years, and love my job. KPBSD is struggling to find and retain speech pathologists, despite good efforts, to the effect that my caseload is now about twice the national average. This has a detrimental effect on staffing (potential for burnout) and service delivery: specialists are being spread so thin that optimal service delivery is difficult to provide and students are the ones who suffer.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

There is a national shortage of speech and hearing specialists. Partly due to Alaska's lack of a defined benefit retirement system, we are no longer able to recruit the specialists we need to provide adequate services to children with special education needs. Allowing for a change in licensing under SB 75 will help us recruit personnel for districts, schools including contract specialists, and assist hard to serve areas that do not have enough people to serve the kids.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

Annarose Miller, MA, CCC-SLP

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Holly Nunn <holly@speechalaska.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: Support of SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to express my support of SB 75. I am a pediatric SLP working in an outpatient clinic setting. Every day I hear from families about the frustration they feel about finding SLPs. They wait for months to have an opportunity to receive services that can fit their needs and schedule. This senate bill would increase the number of clinicians made available in our state by decreasing the wait time for clinicians to gain licensing. As a state with a high military population, it would also allow us to provide continuity of care because we might be able to provide services in other states as families need to relocate. I personally have had to seek licenses in other states to provide teletherapy services for families who have had extended trips to care for loved ones in other states or have had extended travel for their jobs. Families are grateful I was willing to go the extra mile for them, but with participation in the Interstate Compact, I would not need to go through that extra time and cost to gain extra state licenses to help provide the care the families need when they are called away from the state.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

--

Holly Jo Nunn, M.S. CCC-SLP
Speech Language Therapy Services
4325 Laurel Street, Suite 103
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907-569-5666 (office)
holly@speechalaska.com

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Konrad Jackson

From: Andrea Toth <itsmorethanspeech@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2023 9:28 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: Support for SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve a primarily pediatric population in Eagle River and Wasilla. We have a high number of military families and a number of families drive out from Anchorage to our office in Eagle River due to long waitlists. My clinic has been open for almost 3 years and I have been slowly adding more therapists to reduce waitlists. The primary way I am gaining employees is by supporting our UAA-Eastern Carolina partnership, distance masters program, in taking interns who then possibly become employees. It has been hard to attract people to Alaska and the interstate compact would make the move to Alaska easier and the transition into employment more fluid.

On a less personal note, the speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

Personally, I obtained a Colorado license to follow a 15 year old client I had been seeing for 5 years when they made a military move in the middle of COVID. She was not going to be able to initiate services with a new therapist at that time and I wanted to support her.

In addition, I had families moving to Texas and California where I looked into obtaining licenses and the hoops and costs involved resulted in this not happening. I run a business and see up to 40 clients a week, so the time intensive steps to obtaining multiple licenses goes on the back burner.

I have 2 employees who are military spouses moving this summer. They have been wonderful team members and seeing them be able to easily transition into new roles in other states would be wonderful. I have recently interviewed a military spouse who arrives next month and looking to work as a speech pathologist. I have educated her on the steps she needs to take to obtain her license, but the compact as well as Governor Dunleavy's new bill to ease the transition of licensed professionals by having a 180 day period where licenses from other states would be accepted prior to obtaining a license would support new Alaskans.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75!

Andrea Toth, M.A. CCC-SLP
Speech & Language Pathologist
President, Alaska Speech and Language Association

Owner, It's More Than Speech, LLC in Eagle River and Wasilla
itsmorethanspeech@gmail.com
www.itsmorethanspeech.com

Ph: 907-244-0953

EAGLE RIVER CLINIC
12812 Old Glenn Hwy. Unit B-2
Eagle River, AK 99577

WASILLA CLINIC
1700 E. Bogard Rd. Suite 200A
Building A
Wasilla, AK 99654

Konrad Jackson

From: Emily Atton <eatton@allforkidsalaska.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:22 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact)

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve in a pediatric outpatient therapy clinic, where we provide services from birth to 18 for a variety of disorders, not limited to feeding difficulties, autism, ADHD, phonological disorder, dyslexia, and language disorders. I am part of a team at this clinic that services Alaskans living in the greater Anchorage area as well as some families in the bush communities and beyond.

The speech and hearing compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

Rapport and trust are extremely important in the field of speech-language pathologist, specifically in regard to feeding based therapy. I have worked with a couple of families who have had to relocate, for military purposes or due to jobs. Being able to retain these clients with the already established rapport even when they move would allow for continued care and progress, which is essential for skills such as feeding.

SB 75 would also allow families to be seen while they take extended vacations, as Alaskans are always seeking adventures, specifically in the winter. The ability to treat clients via teletherapy in other states would allow for continued progress and thus the chance of regression would decrease.

Lastly, SB 75 would allow us to service other families and children in remote villages. The need for speech language services, specifically in the remote northern villages of Alaska is critical, specifically for feeding based services and parent education.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

Emily Atton M.S., CCC-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist

All For Kids Pediatric Therapy, LLC
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[Anchorage, Alaska 99518](#)
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Konrad Jackson

From: Samantha Hatfield <shatfield@allforkidsalaska.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:03 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve within a pediatric clinic that provides services to children from birth -18 years of age. As a clinic located in Anchorage, we rely on tele-therapy to reach rural clients who do not have access to resources for speech/language therapy services.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

I personally have had several clients who must travel out of state to receive medical care, and during this time, I am unable to provide speech/language therapy services due to current license regulation. Their therapeutic schedule is disrupted, and they miss out on necessary services. Military families are also part of the population I serve. During their transition periods to new states, their children are not receiving therapy services. They also must begin the entire therapeutic process again, which can unfortunately result in long wait-periods. This can lead to regression of skills. Access to speech/language therapy services is critical, and with the current license regulations, many children are unfortunately not being served.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

--

Samantha Hatfield, M.S., CCC-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist
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Konrad Jackson

From: VondaKay Goodman <VGoodman@allforkidsalaska.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 6:43 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: In Support of SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am an SLP for All For Kids Pediatric Therapy Clinic in Anchorage. I provide speech-language therapy to children ages 1 to 18. I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

This would have benefited several of my clients. For example, one of my clients traveled out of state for two months last summer; however, she was unable to receive services which resulted in regression of skills. If this Compact is enacted, then this client (who typically travels out of state during the summer) would continue to receive speech-language therapy for her stuttering.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75.

Sincerely,

Vonda Kay Goodman, M.S., CCC-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist

All for Kids Pediatric Therapy, LLC

6927 Old Seward Highway Suite 100

Anchorage, Alaska 99518

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Konrad Jackson

From: Yvonne San Juan <yvonesj@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 5:08 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. David Wilson
Subject: Interstate Compact SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve Alaskan families in the Anchorage Community as an outpatient pediatric speech-language pathologist at Achieve Speech Therapy LLC.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

Additionally, as a private practice owner, I have seen the desperate need for families to have more access to speech therapy services. There is often a waitlist for families to access services due to not having enough providers in our community. I urge you to consider approving SB 75 to allow Alaskans more access to quality therapy services.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75!

Sincerely,

Yvonne San Juan, M.S., CCC-SLP
Achieve Speech Therapy LLC
Speech-Language Pathologist /Owner

Recognized by Apraxia Kids for Advanced Training and Expertise in Childhood Apraxia of Speech

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ANNE VER HOEF MA, CCC-SLP

Speech - Language Pathologist

5820 Yukon Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
(907) 345-4422
Fax: (907) 345-4422

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I have worked in Alaska as a speech-language pathologist for over 37 years. I have a private practice in Anchorage but have provided services to assist adolescents and adults with speech, voice, language, cognitive and swallowing difficulties all over the state. Indeed, one of the benefits of increases in telehealth service during the pandemic was that people who would NOT have any ANY access to the services and assistance I provide, HAD ACCESS! Anything and everything that we can do to continue telehealth services for needy Alaskans, I hope you will support.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech, voice, language, cognitive, swallowing and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients. I certainly have worked with many older Alaskans who wish to continue their SLP services with me when they travel Outside for a few months in the winter for warmer

climates. At present, they often receive no services for several months.

- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state. This is a key benefit of the Compact and any other increases in telehealth services.

I would like to share some stories of people who would clearly benefit if SB 75 passes and Alaska can join with other states in the Interstate Compact:

- A gentleman with Parkinson's Disease who was referred to me for speech-voice, cognitive-language and swallowing evaluations and treatment. The client was making good progress up to December of this past year. The couple traveled to Arizona so the client could continue to work on physical exercise without as much fear of falling (no ice and snow in AZ). He had to discontinue his speech-language and swallowing treatments. Unfortunately, he had an episode and fell, breaking an arm. The spouse contacted me with grave concerns that her husband, the client, was exhibiting worsening swallowing and his speech was also worse. People could not understand him to render him appropriate assistance and he is in danger of aspiration pneumonia as the swallowing precautions are not being followed. My hands are tied as I am not allowed to "treat" him while he is not in Alaska.
- I have had a contract for at least 10 years with Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC) in Nome, to provide SLP services. Fortunately, the Alaska Native Medical System has telehealth services set up for many years and we have used this successfully for me to evaluate and treat people in Nome and surrounding villages. As "word" of these services spread, more referrals were forthcoming and it was more work than I could handle (in addition to my full private practice). NSHC has hired 5 SLP's in the past three years, with most of them staying less than 6 months. The most recent hire has been there about 6 months, and we hope she will stay. However, NSHC keeps me on contract because I can still provide the "backup" SLP services by telehealth. They have had significant difficulty hiring and retaining SLP (and audiologists) due to the remote location. The compact would significantly improve their ability to secure the necessary services to assist our remote populations.
- A young woman who suffered a severe traumatic brain injury and was making wonderful progress in her speech-language-cognitive and swallowing rehabilitation with me, had to travel out of state while her husband finished law school. The couple wanted to continue working with me as the young woman had worked with

several other SLP's in the past but felt a strong rapport with me and that I had and could help her "the most" [her words]. Unfortunately, I could not work with her while she was out of state. As soon as she returned, she resumed treatment with me and, again, stated she was making the "most" progress with me. She lost over a year of rehabilitation progress, however.

These stories are just a few of the situations in which the Interstate Compact could make a huge difference in the lives of Alaskans. Communication and swallowing are LIFE CRITICAL SKILLS; any impairments in these areas are addressed by the professions of speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Please, please move SB 75 forward to pass this into law.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne Ver Hoef MA, CCC-L-SLP".

Anne Ver Hoef, MA, CCC-L-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist, Certified, Licensed

Anchorage Speech-Language-Cognitive Clinic, Anchorage, AK



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

March 7, 2023

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Chair
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
The Alaska State Legislature
1500 W. Benson Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99503

RE: SB 75

Dear Senator Bjorkman:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support SB 75, which adopts the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 480 ASHA members reside in Alaska.¹

ASHA members often have difficulty obtaining multiple state licenses to practice due to administrative burdens. These burdens hinder their ability to provide quality services and restrict consumer access in underserved and rural communities. I am pleased to support SB 75, which will address these issues by:

- increasing access to care for patients, clients, and students; and
- facilitating continuity of care when patients, clients, and students relocate or travel to another state, specifically members of the military and their spouses.

Passage of this bill would allow Alaska to enjoy the same benefits of the 23 other ASLP-IC member states. We hope the Committee will pass this important legislation to ensure Alaska can join the ASLP-IC.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director of state legislative and regulatory affairs, at sadams@asha.org.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
2023 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Alaska* [Quick Facts].
<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/alaska-state-flyer.pdf>.



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

March 8, 2023

Chairman Jesse Bjorkman
Senate Labor and Commerce
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB 74 and SB 75, Occupational Licensure Compacts

Chairman Bjorkman:

On behalf of the Department of Defense, I am writing in support of the policy changes expressed in SB 74 and 75, which addresses licensing issues affecting our service members and their families.

The Speech-Pathology and Audiology Compact and the Physical Therapy Compact allow military spouses in these professions to continue to work, without the cumbersome process of relicensing, when they move to the State of Alaska. These compacts will promote reciprocity and reduce the barriers to license portability.

Occupational Licensure compacts have been identified by the Department of Defense as the best form of licensure reciprocity for professionals moving across state lines. SB 74 and 75 provide specific provisions to support military spouses. The individual may retain the home state designation during the period the service member is on active duty. Subsequent to designating a home state, the individual shall only change their home state through application for licensure in the new state.

We are grateful for the tremendous efforts that Alaska has historically made supporting our military members and their families. We especially thank Senator Wilson for sponsoring this legislation.

Please feel free to contact me at Tammie.L.Perreault.civ@mail.mil or (571) 424-8264 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tammie L. Perreault", is positioned above the typed name.

Tammie L. Perreault
Northwest Regional Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office
Military Community & Family Policy

To: Senate Labor & Commerce Committee:

Date: March 6th, 2023

Dear Chair Person: Senator Jesse Bjorkman; Vice Chair: Senator Click Bishop; Member: Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson; Member: Senator Kelly Merrick; Member: Senator Forrest Dunbar,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve as a Speech Language Pathologist for Mat-Su Borough School District working with special education preschoolers though students with disabilities that continue with school until age 21 years of age. I am also the back-up SLP for Palmer Maple Springs Skilled Nursing Facility, as well as Ancora Home Health and Hospice. The latter two sites I work with the adult population and their communication and swallowing skill set needs.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
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- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

I came to Alaska in Fall, 2010 and was SHOCKED with the lack of SLPs within the state (in comparison to the 'Lower 48'). This was a big reason for me to stay. Alaskans needed SLPs! Although we have more now, we still fall short of the needs of our population, especially adults that are working to overcome various impairments related to verbal speech, receptive (understanding) and expressive language skills, vocal quality, cognitive communication skills (ie: attention, working memory, executive function skills), and feeding/swallowing impairments which could result in death (ie: choking, aspiration event(s) leading to fatal aspiration pneumonia). I know of individuals that have passed away because they did not receive the speech therapy service interventions they needed.

PLEASE, make it easier for SLPs and Audiologists to come to Alaska to help your constituents, the Alaskan People!

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

Mary P. Dooher, CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist
531 W. Rocker Circle
Wasilla, AK 99654
Cell: (315) 292-8926



March 21, 2023

Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 Audiology, Speech & Language Compact.

I am speech-language pathologist who owns a small private practice in Anchorage that serves children with disabilities. I have seen the benefits that a compact could provide for both my clients and for myself, a small business owner. As part of my practice, I serve military families. In the past few years during the COVID pandemic I had military several families that were re-located to other states and requested that I continue working with their children via teletherapy in their new state of residence. It is difficult for many children with disabilities to adjust to new a provider in a therapeutic relationship and the continuity of care was very important to these families. To continue to work with these children I was required to become licensed in the state they are living. Professional licensing in multiple states was expensive for me as a small business owner and more importantly was a lengthy process to receive the license which interrupted the extremely important continuity of care with these children as I waited for the processing of my license.

There are many benefits for establishing a compact for speech and hearing professionals including consumer protection. Currently Alaska does not have a licensing board for speech pathology and audiology therefore consumer issues or complaints are typically fielded by the state employee(s) that process our applications. The compact will require background checks and assist in oversight for those practicing in Alaska.

I have been practicing as a speech-language pathologist in Alaska since 1989 and during that time there has been a consistent shortage of practitioners which leaves many requiring services to wait for availability.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
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- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue care with their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding my support of SB 75.

Nancy Lovering, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
4325 Laurel Street, Suite 100/103
Anchorage, AK 99508

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you in support of SB 75 (Audiology, Speech & Language Compact).

I currently serve in Bethel Hospital YKHC and also in private practice. I live on the Kenai Peninsula and have lived here for 32 years.

The speech and hearing Compact, when enacted, will provide benefits to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities and the Speech- Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the following ways:

- Allow for Alaskan businesses to fill vacant positions for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in a timely manner, therefore attracting and retaining eligible candidates.
- Provide continuity of care when a client or therapist has relocated without interruption of service delivery due to licensing delays and expenses.
- Deliver services with higher consumer protection for Alaskans with the compact ensuring that acceptable standards of practice are met, promoting cooperation between compact states in the areas of licensure and regulation, requiring background checks for all applicants and requiring that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists practicing in Alaska must follow Alaska's practice regulations.
- Replace the need for speech-language pathologists and audiologists to become licensed in other states when attempting to continue their out of state clients.
- Increases the ability to provide therapy services to Alaskans with speech and hearing disabilities in underserved areas of the state.

There is huge need for speech and language services, especial in the villages. Hiring SLP without delay in licensing for traveling SLP would be eager to come to serve Alaska's population without interruptions. I have worked in Alaska for 32 years and it is unfortunate to see lack of quality services in rural Alaska. By promoting cooperation between compact states in area of licensure and regulations and requiring background checks for applicants and that they follow Alaska's practice regulations will be huge help to all Alaskans.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 75,

Sincerely,

Vidya Oftedal MS CCC-SLP

Alaska Communicative Services -ACSLLC

415 A Lingonberry Lane

Soldotna, Alaska 99669