

Senators of the Education Committee,

I'm reaching out to you today in support of SB 490, for the Interstate Compact for Speech–Language–Pathology.

Allowing SLPs to cross state lines to work (or, perhaps more importantly, work from home or their private practice via telehealth) is crucial to the wellbeing of the clients we serve, birth through adults.

It improves portability for military spouses, increases access to services in rural communities, and addresses the shortage of SLPs in Kansas. Some data:

Preliminary data from a current survey of Kansas school administrators (n=30) and SLPs (n=141) shows a need for 26% more SLPs. There are a reported 60 unfilled positions (5-year average) and an additional 51 positions needed to adjust for high caseload size in districts/cooperatives. Of 141 school SLPs surveyed thus far, 42% report caseloads higher than the national median of 48 (ASHA, 2018). There is a similar demand for SLPs in the health care field and this will only increase as our aging population needs to access health care that is harder to find. Nationally, 27% of SLPs reported openings in health care facilities (ASHA, 2019).

Not everything can be done via tele-practice, but our field is quickly understanding what *does work*. I run a website for speech–language–pathologists that tells them about all best, most clinically applicable research in our field each month, and we're seeing some **wonderful results for clients with telehealth**, that really have a patient-centered-care focus.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Meredith P. Harold, PhD, CCC-SLP
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