

Good Evening

As your constituent, I'm writing to ask for your support of H. 86, which would allow our state to join the Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC). The ASLP-IC helps audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) practice in multiple compact states without the administrative burden of having to be licensed in each one. So far, 23 states have passed this legislation and H. 86 allows Vermont to join this important compact.

Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. SLPs identify, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders.

H. 86 is an important part of ensuring a viable speech and hearing workforce in Vermont. To practice across state lines, audiologists and SLPs must currently obtain a license in each state where they want provide services, an onerous and expensive process. The ASLP-IC facilitates the interstate practice of audiology and speech-language pathology while maintaining public protection.

H. 86 will help military spouses maintain their profession when relocating; relieve our providers in border cities from having to apply for multiple licenses; and increase access to speech and hearing care for patients in underserved and geographically isolated areas through services delivered via telehealth.

Please support H. 86 and make Vermont the 24th state to join the ASLP-IC!

I am an ASHA certified Speech - Language Pathologist (SLP) since 1981, with a Certificate of Clinical Competence(CCC). Despite my national certification, I am required to have licensure through two departments in the state of Vermont, department of education and Office of Professional Regulation. Were I to consider working in an adjacent state, I would need to obtain an additional license from that state.

Finally, let me add that there is an ongoing shortage of SLPs in this country, and sadly in my home state of Vermont. This is especially true for school settings. Children who experience disabilities that impact communication are impaired in their ability to gain access to a free and appropriate public education. I believe H. 86 could encourage those in our profession to favorably consider employment in Vermont schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. And thank you for the work that you've dedicated yourself to for our town and state.

Brenda Bennett