

TO: Government Operations Committee  
FROM: Francesca Badillo  
February 9, 2016

I am writing in opposition to the three bills that will affect SLPs- S.217, S.188, and H.612 because I believe that eliminating the Educational Endorsement for speech language pathologists (SLPs), without carefully examining the consequences, intended and unintended, could be mistake.

My concern is that there has not been time to explore and communicate how moving licensure from the Agency of Education to the Office of Professional Regulation may inadvertently misalign school-based SLPs with the broader school system, a concern I share with the Agency of Education and Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators.

The Office of Professional Regulation is responsible for licensing both physical and occupational therapists, and the work PTs and OTs do for their students is invaluable. Many schools employ a consultative model for integrating these important services; and PTs and OTs are considered "related service providers". By contrast, the role of school-based SLPs includes providing instruction to address underlying communication deficits that are obstacles to accessing the curriculum. For this reason, SLPs are more frequently hired full-time by schools to provide direct and frequent intervention to students, and we are present for day-to-day problem solving and collaboration to support student success in the classroom. There is a valid concern that by shifting licensure away from the Agency of Education to the Office of Professional Regulation, the role of SLPs in schools may change over the long-term.

Along with other SLPs in my school district and across the state, I learned of the need to license with the OPR, but it was unclear that this would mean a definitive shift away from the Agency of Education. It would take more time and consideration to make sure that this shift would not inadvertently and negatively affect our professional identity or our role in providing crucial services in the public school system.

Thank you for your time,  
Francesca Badillo  
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