



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

February 25, 2019

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 208
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Senate Bill 983

Dear Senator Dela Cruz:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to recommend amending SB 983 to add audiologists and speech-language pathologists possessing certification through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to the certification incentive program.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 204,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 500 of our members reside in Hawaii.

A salary bonus and certification funding can assist in addressing the shortages of qualified audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) that Hawaii is experiencing by helping to recruit and retain these professionals whose services may bring significant Medicaid funding into the school district. A bonus can also aid in eliminating costly contract employees; thereby:

- improving continuity of service delivery for students;
- providing additional assurance to school administrators by knowing that quality services are being provided to all students in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements; and
- contributing to enhanced satisfaction of parents whose children are receiving quality services from competent professionals.

Currently, 11 states have passed legislation calling for funding of ASHA certified audiologists and SLPs. Additionally, 99 school districts nationwide have provided bonuses to ASHA certified audiologists and SLPs.

ASHA Certification: Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)

ASHA's Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) is the fundamental standard among major health professions and the most widely recognized symbol of competency for audiologists (CCC-A) and SLPs (CCC-SLP). Certification is important for internal professional recognition and external accountability. To maintain the CCC, audiologists and SLPs must complete professional development activities every three years.

Background on Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology

Audiology Professional Qualifications

Audiologists earn a clinical doctoral degree and are highly qualified to conduct comprehensive assessments that determine hearing loss, auditory function, balance and related systems, and evaluate, select, and dispense hearing aids. Audiologists also assess the candidacy of

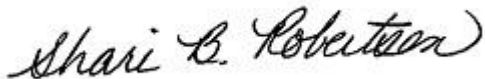
individuals with hearing loss for cochlear implants and work with medical teams to provide fitting, mapping, and audiologic rehabilitation to optimize the use of these devices.

Speech-Language Pathology Professional Qualifications

SLPs are highly skilled professionals who, at minimum, hold a master's degree in communication disorders from an accredited program recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. SLPs complete a challenging education and training program, a supervised clinical fellowship, and must pass a nationally standardized examination. SLPs identify, assess, and treat a variety of communication disorders involving speech, language, fluency (e.g., stuttering), voice and resonance problems, cognitive communication disorders such as memory, attention and problem-solving disorders, and swallowing and associated feeding disorders. SLPs provide services in a variety of practice settings ranging from schools to institutions such as hospitals and rehabilitation centers, early intervention programs, and private practice.

Thank you for considering ASHA's request to amend SB 983 to provide the benefits of a salary bonus and certification reimbursement to qualified, ASHA certified audiologists and SLPs. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shari B. Robertson".

Shari B. Robertson, PhD, CCC-SLP
2019 ASHA President