



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Julie Raque Adams
Chair
Committee on Licensing and Occupations
Kentucky General Assembly
702 Capital Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601

RE: SB 177

Dear Senator Adams:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I am writing in opposition to SB 177. While we share the legislature's goal of addressing workforce shortages and streamlining reimbursement, the proposal to eliminate the postgraduate professional experience requirement is a short-sighted solution that will have long-term, detrimental effects on Kentucky's health care infrastructure and the quality of care provided to its citizens.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 247,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 2,500 ASHA members reside in Kentucky.¹

Risks to the Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC)

Interstate compacts depend entirely on regulatory uniformity. During the initial drafting of the ASLP-IC, a project team of legislators, practitioners, and licensing board members established the supervised professional experience as a non-negotiable prerequisite. They based this decision on the fact that 48 states and the District of Columbia already enforced this standard. Since then, Missouri has updated its requirements to align with the compact, leaving only one as the remaining outlier.

Enacting this legislation would jeopardize Kentucky's standing in the compact, stripping resident practitioners of their ability to participate. It also creates a one-way door effect: Kentucky would lose its ability to seamlessly recruit out-of-state clinicians to fill local service gaps through streamlined compact privileges. This would be especially detrimental to military families. The U.S. Department of War recognizes interstate compacts as the gold standard for ensuring career continuity for military spouses.

Devaluation of Kentucky Professional Licenses

Nearly every other state requires a supervised postgraduate year for licensure. If SB 177 passes, a license issued in Kentucky would no longer be considered equivalent by peer boards. Kentucky-trained SLPs who relocate could find themselves ineligible for licensure by reciprocity and required to complete additional supervised hours mid-career to meet the statutory requirements of other jurisdictions.

Additionally, this bill inadvertently devalues degrees from Kentucky universities. By making graduates less competitive in the national job market, the state risks discouraging top-tier students from enrolling in Kentucky's speech-language pathology programs.

Public Protection and Clinical Readiness

The transition from a controlled graduate practicum to a full-time, high-productivity clinical setting is a significant shift. The postgraduate experience year acts as a vital bridge. It provides necessary mentorship to develop the skills to handle high-acuity cases independently, navigate the complexities of insurance billing, and protect patients by ensuring that new clinicians have a seasoned professional to consult on difficult ethical and clinical dilemmas.

Kentucky is not the first state to consider this path. Both Virginia and Oregon recently evaluated similar proposals to eliminate supervised experience. In both instances, after hearing from experts and stakeholders, those states rejected the proposals because the risks to professional standing and public safety far outweighed the perceived benefits.

ASHA is committed to working with the Commonwealth to find innovative ways to strengthen the workforce. However, undermining the nationally recognized entry-to-practice standard is not the answer. We urge you to maintain the current requirements to ensure Kentucky's SLPs remain highly qualified, professionally mobile, and prepared to serve the public.

Thank you for your time and dedication to protecting the health and welfare of Kentuckians. 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,



Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, EdD, CCC-SLP
2026 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2025). *Kentucky* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-flyers/kentucky-state-flyer.pdf>