

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Jesse Bjorkman, Chair Senate Labor and Commerce Committee State Capitol Room 9 Juneau, AK 9980

RE: SB 157

Dear Senator Bjorkman:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I am writing to oppose SB 157, which creates a Sunrise Review Board to review legislation that proposes a change to licensure unless the proposal has been the subject of a review within the preceding four years.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 400 ASHA members reside in Alaska.¹

The proposed bill creates unnecessary redundancies and additional budgetary burdens for the state of Alaska by creating a Sunrise Review Board. Audiologists and SLPs are governed by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, which exists to protect consumers and practitioners. The department already provides examination review and collects fees for the practicing of the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology, including provisions for temporary licensing for military personnel and their spouses. It also has the authority to issue cease and desist orders and to issue disciplinary sanctions including the suspension and revocation of practitioner licenses. The department has a clearly defined complaint process for consumers and has the staff to serve the professions. A Sunrise Review Board would be duplicitous of these existing efforts.

Thank you for considering ASHA's opposition to SB 157. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP

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2024 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Alaska* [Quick Facts]. https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/alaska-state-flyer.pdf