



AMERICAN  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-  
HEARING  
ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2018

The Honorable Francis C. Thompson  
Louisiana State Senate  
P.O. Box 68  
Delhi, LA 71232

RE: S.B. 494

Dear Senator Thompson:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to oppose S.B. 494, which establishes an Office of Supervision of Occupational Boards.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 198,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists identify, assess, and treat speech and language problems, including swallowing disorders. Over 2,900 of our members reside in Louisiana.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists are represented on the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Board) and possess the expertise to analyze and assess any proposed changes to the scope of practice for their professions. Under current law, the Board is charged with insuring the safety and welfare of the public they serve. Having the Office of Supervision of Occupational Boards review proposed scope changes will create unnecessary time lags and increased costs. In addition, ASHA is concerned that the staff of this office would not have the professional expertise in the areas that they are seeking to address. In addition, the existing licensure board has a public member who can assess the potential harm or benefit to the health, safety, or welfare of consumers when any changes to the scope of the professions are proposed. Creating an additional office for this purpose is redundant and unnecessary.

ASHA urges you to oppose this potentially expensive legislation. Autonomous licensure boards have been the most effective tool in handling consumer issues and maintaining quality standards for the professionals who serve them.

Thank you for considering our opposition to S.B. 494. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at [ecrowe@asha.org](mailto:ecrowe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

Elise Davis-McFarland, PhD, CCC-SLP  
2018 ASHA President