



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

April 29, 2019

The Honorable Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
49th District
119B Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706

RE: HB 2605

Dear Senator Bertino-Tarrant:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support HB 2605, which would provide licensed speech-language pathologists (SLPs) with an updated pathway to work in the Illinois public school system.

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 8,900 ASHA members reside in Illinois.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of speech-language pathologists is projected to grow 18% from 2016-2026, much faster than all other occupations at 7% and more rapidly than other health related professionals.¹

A recent survey conducted by ASHA found that 54% of SLPs reported more job openings than job seekers. In urban areas there were 51% more job openings than job seekers, while in rural areas the percent of job openings rose to 60%.²

Given the shortage of SLPs in school settings, ASHA supports an easier pathway for state licensed and ASHA-certified SLPs in Illinois who want to transition to a school setting. HB 2605 will allow those individuals qualified to practice in health care and private practice settings to also work in schools.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's position on HB 2605. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Janet Deppe, ASHA's director of state affairs, at jdeppe@asha.org.

Sincerely,

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

¹ The Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). *Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291127.htm#9>.

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2018) *2018 Schools Survey report: SLP workforce and work conditions*. Retrieved from www.asha.org/research/memberdata/schoolssurvey/.