



Rhode Island Speech and Hearing Association

May 6, 2024

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island Legislature
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB 8219

Dear Representative Donovan:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Speech and Hearing Association (RISHA), I write to express support for HB 8219, which would adopt the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC).

RISHA's mission is to support the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology in the state of Rhode Island through advocacy, public awareness, and professional development on behalf of its members and the individuals they serve.

RISHA is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals with communication and related disorders by providing continuing education, advocacy and professional support for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in Rhode Island. Our members work in schools, medical facilities, rehabilitation centers, early intervention programs, private practice, universities, and other agencies, serving people of all ages who have communication disorders.

Rhode Island speech-language pathologists (SLPs) often have difficulty obtaining multiple state licenses due to administrative burdens and costs. These burdens hinder their ability to provide quality services and restrict consumer and professional access in communities along Rhode Island's borders, as well as underserved and rural communities around the country. I'm pleased to support HB 8219, which will address these issues by:

- Increasing access to care for all.
- Enhancing consumer protections—SLPs who lose their license in their home state due to illegal or unethical behavior would not be able to relocate to Rhode Island and obtain a state license here.
- Maintaining state sovereignty—SLPs from outside of Rhode Island would be privileged to practice in Rhode Island, but would have to follow our state's policies and regulations.

- Improving continuity of care when clients, patients, and/or students travel or relocate.
- Supporting spouses of relocating active-duty military personnel.

During the pandemic, I personally observed disruptions in services for students at my school (an out-of-district placement for students in RI, MA, and CT) when we needed to move to teletherapy. Some of the students lived in MA, and because MA did not waive it's local licensing requirements for tele-therapists, these students were cut off from their familiar therapists as they waited months for the licensing process to be completed.

Approval of this legislation would enable Rhode Island to become a part of the ASLP-IC, joining 30 other member states. RISHA is joined by the U.S. Department of Defense, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and over 30 national organizations, in supporting this legislation. I hope this important legislation will be adopted in 2024, so Rhode Island practitioners and residents with communication disorders can enjoy the benefits of the ASLP-IC.

Thank you for considering RISHA's support of HB 8219. If you or your staff have any questions or want to discuss this matter further, please contact Allan B. Shaw, RISHA President, at allanbshawsp@gmail.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan B. Shaw', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Allan B. Shaw, MS, CCC-SLP
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RISHA President
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