



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2018

The Honorable Rick Ward
Louisiana State Senate
3741 Highway 1
Port Allen, LA 70767

RE: S.B. 504

Dear Senator Ward:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to oppose S.B. 504, which requires a comprehensive review of all entry regulations for the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology by the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology along with reporting to the state legislature any changes to the regulations governing these professions.

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 of their professions. The Board composition also provides for a public member who is an individual, family member, or spouse of someone with a communication disorder. Under current law, the Board is charged with insuring the safety and welfare of the public they serve.

Audiologists in Louisiana hold a doctoral degree, or equivalent, in audiology, have completed a supervised clinical practicum, and have passed an exam approved by the Board. Speech-language pathologists hold a master's degree, or equivalent, in speech-language pathology, have completed a supervised clinical practicum, have passed an exam also approved by the Board, and have completed at least 36 weeks of full-time supervised postgraduate professional employment, or its part-time equivalent.

ASHA urges you to oppose S.B. 504, which is unnecessary and potentially expensive legislation. Autonomous licensure boards have been the most effective tool for handling consumer issues and maintaining quality standards for the professionals who serve them.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elise Davis-McFarland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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