

*****Sample Letter*** please modify as able to personalize your letter.**

Name

Address

Dear Representative _____,

Representative Donna Oberlander recently introduced House Bill 1561 that would update Act 238 of 1984, the Speech-Language and Hearing Act. That Act licensed speech-language pathologists (SLPs), audiologists and teachers of the hearing impaired, and created a licensing board to regulate the professions.

It has been almost three decades since the Act was passed and much has changed in the delivery of health care services, including speech-language pathology, in that time. The goal of Rep. Oberlander's bill is to update the licensure requirements and scope of practice for speech-language pathology to reflect and incorporate the changes that have taken place over the past 30 years to better protect our consumers.

The primary changes that the bill will make are:

- To add a definition of the "practice of speech-language pathology that reflects the scope of practice in most states across the country.
- To create a separate license for "school-based speech-language pathology" to deal with the needs of students and school districts for SLPs to provide services in the public schools.
- To require anyone practicing speech-language pathology in the state to be licensed. Please note that persons currently providing speech-language pathology services in the public schools who have a certificate from the Department of Education but do not have a license will not be required to obtain the new school-based SLP license. The bill will not put anyone out of work.
- To create a new provisional license for speech-language pathologists to allow them to practice while working under professional supervision during their clinical fellowship.
- To update the Act to include provisions regarding impaired professionals.

The overall goal of the bill is to provide better treatment for individuals suffering from communication disabilities or swallowing problems and to improve consumer protection in Pennsylvania by ensuring that all persons performing the functions of an SLP are properly licensed by the state regardless of the setting in which they practice.

I strongly support this legislation and ask that you vote the bill out of committee. I would like to talk with you or meet with you to discuss the importance of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,