

TSHA

Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Interstate Compact

Support HB 1875 (Rep. Ryan Guillen) Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Interstate Compact. Talking points attached. Important to help resolve severe shortage of speech-language pathologists in schools, hospitals, universities, and clinics. Facilitates ability to practice in multiple “Compact” states. There is no cost to the State of Texas and is optional for licensees to apply for “Compact privileges.”

Education

Support Teacher Pay Raise.

- **Add speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists (AUDs) to any bill providing for a teacher pay raise.** SLPs & AUDs are an integral part of the education team for children with communication and related disorders, and particularly for those children with special needs.
- The “Education Code” does not include speech-language pathologists and audiologists.
- There is a severe shortage of speech-language pathologists in the public schools. A 2022 TSHA/TCASE survey showed 89% of schools reported a shortage and 91% indicated a need for additional positions.
- Speech-language pathologists & audiologists provide more Medicaid (SHARS) revenue for school districts than any other professionals.

Oppose School Vouchers/School Choice.

- Prevent any transfer of public funds using vouchers, education savings accounts, or corporate tax credits to private schools or individuals.
- TSHA embraces parents as partners in their child’s education.
- Oppose the use of vouchers to dilute funding for special education.
- Uncertainty of how many children, type and severity of disabilities to expect for enrollment annually is an administrative and staffing nightmare for districts.
- Private schools do not necessarily have to comply with federal regulations e.g., IDEA, FERPA.

Support Teacher Retirement Funding

- TSHA supports increases in teacher retirement funding legislation.
- TSHA follows the lead of TRTA on retirement related legislation.

Medicaid/SHARS

- **Support** expansion of Medicaid services.
- **Support** Medicaid “express lane” enrollment options.
- **Support** increase funding specifically for service rates paid to providers.
- **Support** specifically increasing funding for SHARS (school Medicaid).
- **Support** Medicaid funding issues in the Senate Finance and House Appropriations committees.

Other Bills of Special Interest to Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists

- **SB 619 Sen. Nathan Johnson: (support)** Newborn Infant Hearing Screening. Facilitates newborn hearing screening program.
- **SB 51 Sen. Judith Zaffirini: (support)** Enhances health benefit coverage of hearing aids for children.
- **SB 55 Sen. Judith Zaffirini: (support)** Study of services for autism and funding.
- **HB 1111 Rep. Terry Meza: (support)** Study of validity of services and payment for autism.
- **HB 667 Rep. Ann Johnson: (support)** Licensure of Music Therapists. ASHA has submitted more restrictive amendment language to prevent encroachment into communication and related disorders services.
- **HB 1390 Rep. Matt Shaheen (support)** Telemedicine /Telepractice services reimbursement. Maintain payments for Telepractice services.

For questions or comments please contact the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (TSHA) Legislative team: Larry Higdon, Director of Governmental Relations, 830-265-0828 / lwhtsha@gmail.com or Mark J. Hanna, Legal and Legislative Counsel, 512-477-6200 / mhanna@markjhanna.com or Bobbie Kay Turkett, VP Advocacy, government@txsha.org.