

**HB 5023: Statement of Support
Joint Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education
February 18, 2015**

Senator Rod Monroe, Co-Chair
Representative Betty Komp, Co-Chair
Representative Barbara Smith Warner
Representative Sherrie Sprenger
Representative Kathleen Taylor

Co-Chairs Komp and Monroe and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Oregon Speech-Language & Hearing Association (OSHA), representing 1,361 members statewide including 987 Speech Language Pathologists, thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on HB 5023. Specifically, OSHA is in support of Section 5 relating to the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

OSHA is extremely supportive of the Board and its staff, particularly as the number of licensees continues to grow, placing a larger burden on Agency resources. Along with the increased number of licensees, implementation of the new criminal background check program will require additional staffing commitment. While the Board has not previously been at the forefront with regard to investigating the background of its applicants, it now stands fully prepared to implement this crucial consumer protection program.

In order to protect the public, it is essential that the Board is provided with adequate staffing and other resources needed to carry out the licensure and enforcement provisions of ORS 681 and OAR Chapter 335. OSHA recognizes the importance of careful scrutiny of an applicant's background and credentials and is fully supportive of the protection of the vulnerable clients OSHA members serve.

Since an increase in license fees is not needed, the Board seeks only your approval to move forward. OSHA members are fully supportive and we ask that you return HB 5023 to the full Ways and Means Committee with a "do pass" recommendation with full funding of the packages requested. Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment.