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Dear Sir or Ma'am

I am an Occupational Therapist working in the school system. I serve students ages 3-21 years of age who have some level of disability impacting their ability to learn and fully participate in the school and educational setting. Some of these students have minor disabilities and some have extensive disability which requires extensive support to ensure their health and safety as well as ensure their ability to participate in an education.

Access and provision of Occupational Therapy services are mandated under federal law; IDEA and EHA.

Currently, there are no guidelines or structure to determine the maximum workload that an Occupational Therapist should carry. Essentially, the lack of workload regulation is compromising a student's ability to receive the Occupational Therapy services that are written on their I.E.P., which is a legal document. It is not uncommon for Occupational Therapist to be assigned a caseload size of 70-100 students. These are some of the highest rates nationally. This is an unrealistic amount of students to manage and causing many students to be underserved. This stress of caseload burden is the primary cause for high turnover rate for Occupational Therapist in the education setting. A more ideal limit would be 40-50 students per Occupational Therapist.

Our state organization, Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon is supporting this bill and is recommending that workload formulas or caseload caps be proposed. I personally am recommending a caseload cap regulation be placed. This is good practice for supporting labor practices and is good practice for meeting the needs of students.

Please support HB 3263 which will lead to better management of OT service in schools which improves student outcomes and ensures adherence to federal law (IDEA).

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Mary T. Austin, OT/L