



Date: May 16, 2023

To: Chair Monroe-Moreno, Vice Chair Backus, and Members of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

From: The Nevada Speech Language Hearing Association (NSHA) and the NSHA Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services

Re: AB45

Dear Chair Monroe-Moreno, Vice Chair Backus, and Members of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Nancy Kuhles. I am a Speech-Language Pathologist and Co-Chair of the Nevada Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSHA) Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services.

On behalf of NSHA and the NSHA Coalition, we are in support of AB 45 and respectfully request a proposed amendment.

AB 45 as originally drafted included Speech-Language Pathologists per the definition in [NRS 629.031](#).

AB 45 as amended on March 23, 2023 included our Audiologist counterparts (Section 4; subsection 7), but did not include Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). It appears the amendment may have inadvertently removed these highly qualified providers of health care.

This is a concern as there is a critical shortage of SLPs, as well as Audiologists, in Nevada, and access to these providers of health care is of utmost importance to the citizens of our state.

NSHA and the NSHA Coalition respectfully requests an amendment to AB 45 to include Speech-Language Pathologists in section 4, "Provider of health care".

Nevada is expected to see a 38% increase in demand for SLPs from 2020 to 2030. There is a critical need for SLPs in Nevada in all practice settings.

Nevada is 51st in the number of SLPs per capita (28.6 per 100,000 citizens). The lowest in the nation. Of the 960 American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) certified SLPs, only 81 provide multilingual services.

There is a critical need for access to speech and language services provided by SLPs to Nevada children and youth with disabilities. Nevada school districts and charter schools face a critical shortage of school-based SLPs as shown by data collected over the last 16 years. Since 2007, data collected by the NSHA Coalition has shown on average a yearly shortage of 75 SLPs.

Inclusion of Speech-Language Pathologists, along with our Audiologist counterparts, in AB 45 will provide an incentive for these highly qualified providers of health care to practice in Nevada, support our underserved communities in attracting and retaining SLPs and Audiologists in their communities, and help address the workforce shortage.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Kuhles, M.S. CCC-SLP
ASHA Fellow
NSHA Coalition Co-Chair

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