

# OSHGAC

HB 557  
Written Opposition Testimony  
Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the House Health Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in opposition to HB 557 on behalf of the Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition (OSHGAC). OSHGAC is made up of representatives from the Ohio Academy of Audiology, the Ohio Council of Speech & Hearing Administrators, the Ohio School Speech-Pathology and Educational Audiology Coalition and the Ohio Speech-Language and Hearing Association. In all, our coalition represents more than 3500 speech and hearing healthcare professionals across Ohio.

OSHGAC opposes HB 557 because of the overly broad definition of “art therapy” in the bill. As outlined in lines 1975 – 1979 of the bill, “art therapy includes therapeutic intervention to facilitate alternative modes of receptive and expressive communication and evaluation and assessment to define and implement art-based treatment plans to address cognitive, behavioral, developmental, and emotional needs.” OSHGAC interprets this language to suggest that an art therapist will be permitted to evaluate, assess, and treat communication disorders. This is in direct conflict with the scope of practice of speech-language pathologists.

ORC 4753.01 defines the practice of speech-language pathology as the “planning, directing, supervising, and conducting habilitative or rehabilitative counseling programs for individuals or groups of individuals who have or are suspected of having disorders of communication, any service in speech-language pathology including prevention, identification, evaluation, consultation, habilitation or rehabilitation, instruction, and research.” In addition, ORC 4753.02 prohibits the unauthorized practice of speech language pathology; that is, only a speech language pathologist can practice the evaluation and treatment of disorders of communication.

By defining art therapy to include evaluation and treatment of receptive and expressive communication, HB 557 directly conflicts with ORC 4753.02 which strictly limits evaluation and treatment of communication disorders to the practice of speech-language pathology. Because this is statutorily protected as the sole domain of speech-language pathologists, it cannot be added to the scope of practice for art therapists.

OSHGAC would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this bill further with the sponsor and other interested parties, in an effort to find common ground on the practice of art therapy in a way which does not infringe on the scope of practice of speech-language pathologists. Because that opportunity has not occurred, OSHGAC believes that a vote on HB 557 is premature.

OSHGAC respectfully requests that this bill be given additional time so that interested parties can work with the sponsor on amendments to improve the bill so as to ensure it is not unlawfully infringing on other scopes of practice. Thank you for your consideration of OSHGAC's testimony.