

February 3rd, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I write in support of Senate Bill 7, the Occupational Therapy licensure compact. I am an occupational therapist and have been licensed in Ohio since 1996. I graduated from The Ohio State University and have worked to support children, adolescents, and adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities my entire career as a clinician and researcher.

I recently had the opportunity to return to take an occupational therapy position at a large organization who provides employment training to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Autism, and Cerebral Palsy. We have locations in 47 states and serve over 5,000 individuals with disabilities per year in internships that lead to employment. There is a severe shortage of occupational therapy who serve this particular population with the expertise to design adaptations, modifications, and interventions in employment for this unique population.

I am currently licensed in Indiana and Ohio. In order to provide skilled occupational therapy services in additional states, I would need to seek additional licenses and maintain those licenses in each state. This is an expense and logistical headache as each state has different requirements and deadlines — Ohio is smart and has a July 1st renewal, while Indiana is Indiana and has a December 31st renewal. This compact would allow me to provide occupational therapy services in other states in the compact which would help an underserved population.

COVID-19 has made the need for services for this population even more critical and the possibility to have more occupational therapy providers in Ohio and around the country critical.

I was on faculty at The Ohio State University for 13 years and taught over 500 occupational therapy students and have maintained contact with many of them. Several of these students are married to members of our armed forces and they move frequently, sometimes without much notice. It is a real struggle for these young families to leave a job to find another one in the new state. My first thought is always about the difficulty of getting a new license and the expense and hassle that causes.

Ohio has an outstanding and responsive licensure board, but not all states are as fortunate. There have been times when these therapists have had to delay the start of jobs until the licensure paperwork comes through. Licensure board verification often involves having specific forms signed by the university — the state of Virginia requires that the university president sign off to verify the graduate attended the university and was of good character at one point. This can take time and needless hassle. A common portal that many states can use and verify that a therapist is a graduate of an accredited program with appropriate credentials and continuing education is efficient and portable.

I urge you to consider the occupational therapy compact for Ohio.

Sincerely,



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