

February 2, 2021

Dear Ohio Senate Health Committee Members:

RE: Support for SB-7, Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Legislation

This correspondence is on behalf of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT®), in support of the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Legislation now before you for consideration. As with other mutual recognition compacts, this compact requires member states to agree to and recognize active and unencumbered licenses from other member states. It is important to highlight that this legislative initiative is supported jointly by NBCOT and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

NBCOT is the certification body for over 190,000 occupational therapy professionals in the United States who are currently certified as either an Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR®) or a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA®). The mission of NBCOT is to serve the public interest by advancing client care and professional practice through evidence-based certification standards and the validation of knowledge essential for effective practice in occupational therapy. NBCOT's vision is certified occupational therapy professionals providing effective evidence-based services across all areas of practice worldwide.

NBCOT certification programs have received and maintain accreditation by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NBCOT is a proud member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE).

Currently, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia require NBCOT initial certification for occupational therapy state regulation (e.g., licensing). It is worth noting that in the profession of occupational therapy, uniform licensing requirements exist throughout each of these jurisdictions. These uniform requirements include consistent educational/academic requirements, practicum internships, and successful completion of the national certification examination which is developed and administered by NBCOT. Each occupational therapy regulatory board also recognizes

the same minimum passing score which enhances consistency from one jurisdiction to another. This consistent regulatory foundation throughout the profession provides a strong infrastructure to support the occupational therapy licensure compact.

In the spirit of serving the public interest, NBCOT supports the occupational therapy licensure compact because it will

- provide greater access to patient/client care,
- enhance the exchange of adverse and disciplinary action information amongst occupational therapy state regulatory boards who participate in the compact, which helps to protect the public we serve,
- require criminal background checks of occupational therapy practitioners,
- facilitate mobility and portability for occupational therapy practitioners, which ultimately benefits patients/clients who need care including those who live in rural and/or underserved areas,
- allow military personnel and spouses to maintain their certifications more easily when moving from one location to another, and
- promote a more streamlined, flexible approach to patient/client care during times of state and/or national emergency, such as the pandemic we are experiencing today.

In closing, NBCOT appreciates your consideration of this occupational therapy licensure compact legislation, which is similar to other professional compacts including physical therapy, medicine, nursing, psychology, speech pathology and audiology, emergency medical services, and others.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Grace".

Paul Grace, MS, CAE
NBCOT, President and CEO