

Testimony on HB 491

Sally Demmler, Hamilton County Educational Service Center
February 27, 2018

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 491.

My name is Sally Demmler and I am the Director of Intervention and Support Services for the Hamilton County Educational Service Center. I oversee the programs and placement of over 300 ESC employees currently providing related services in both public and private schools throughout southwest Ohio. Prior to being the Director of Intervention and Support Services, I was a Speech-Language Pathologist serving public and private schools.

Related Service professionals covered by HB 49 include: Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Health Care Providers, Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physical Therapists and Physical Therapy Assistants, and Social Workers.

To practice in any setting, these professionals must hold an Ohio license from their respective state licensing boards.

HB 491 seeks to allow these already-licensed individuals to work in a school setting as substitutes without having to obtain an additional pupil services license through the Ohio Department of Education. The bill requires related services professionals applying for a substitute license to submit a current valid license and all materials required to complete a criminal record check and be part of the BCI Rapback system.

HB 491 addresses a critical need as there continues to be a shortage in Ohio schools in many of the related service areas.

Often, there is a properly credentialed individual who may be retired or working in a private setting who has the professional license but does not have the ODE license. Many of these individuals have expressed a desire to work as a short-term or long-term substitute in a school setting, but decline employment offers because of the additional ODE licensure requirement. They also have no desire or intention to work permanently in the schools.

To guard against school districts using substitutes instead of full-time employees, HB 491 specifies that related service personnel with a substitute license may not be employed in a full-time position without satisfying additional licensure requirements established by the State Board.

HB 491 will eliminate a duplicate licensing process and encourage more related services professionals to work as much-needed substitutes in Ohio's schools. I ask for your support of the bill.

Thank you for your time and attention and I will be happy to take your questions.

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