



January 27, 2021
Senate Health Committee
Proponent – SB 5

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and all members of the Senate Health Committee, my name is Dr. Tonya Apke and I am the current President of the Ohio Physical Therapy Association and I am also an Assistant Professor and the Director of Clinical Education for the doctorate of physical therapy program at The Ohio State University.

On behalf of the Ohio Physical Therapy Association (OPTA), we are requesting your favorable consideration for Senate Bill 5, entering Ohio into the Physical Therapy (PT) Compact. The OPTA is the state professional association representing physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and physical therapy students in Ohio.

There are 29 other states who either have a fully operational PT Compact system or have passed their enabling legislation. This bill, entering Ohio into the compact, allows practice portability for licensees who live in a Compact state. Compact activity in states surrounding Ohio are: Kentucky (enacted), West Virginia (enacted) Pennsylvania (enacted), Indiana (legislation introduced), and Michigan (legislation introduced).

According to www.PTcompact.org: The Physical Therapy Compact is an agreement between member states to improve access to physical therapist services for the public by increasing the mobility of eligible physical therapy providers to work in multiple states. This is especially important for those clinicians who work in border cities such as Cincinnati and Toledo where they could potentially work in multiple states. One example includes therapists who work for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. There are clinics located on both sides of the river and therapists could potentially work or cover at various clinics.

The OPTA believes entering the Compact will attract additional physical therapists to practice in Ohio while also giving our current licensees added license portability to serve patients. It will also make licensure more seamless for practicing PTs allowing them to use their extensive skills more widely. The Compact is also a useful tool in respect to telehealth. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the need for telehealth utilization. The Compact would allow more PTs to continue to treat their patients remotely. Also, obtaining compact privilege for licensees is much faster, easier and less expensive than going through the current process if someone were to move or be relocated.

This legislation has broad support in Ohio and across the nation and particularly with our military PTs and spouses. This legislation would decrease the cost and burden of moving into Ohio, which is especially important for early career professionals whose student loan debt burden may affect their choice of practice locations.

The OPTA has worked closely with the Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers Board on this issue. The profession and the regulators of our profession are fully supportive of Ohio entering the PT Compact.

This same legislation was considered in the previous General Assembly. We were pleased that the Senate unanimously passed the legislation in the 133rd General Assembly, but the clock ran out before it could cross the final finish line in 2020. SB 272 did not receive any opposition testimony while being debated last year. We thank the bill sponsors Senators Roegner and Blessing for their work on this important bill and for their willingness to reintroduce the legislation so soon in the new General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for your consideration. The OPTA is excited to work with the legislature on moving Ohio towards becoming the next state to enter the Compact. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.