

Lou Mansolillo

From: Heather Saakov <heather_saakov@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 1:41 PM
To: House Corporations Committee
Cc: Rep. McNamara, Joseph M.
Subject: Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact

March 25, 2024

Dear Chairperson Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee,
Thank you for your service.

My name is Heather Saakov and I am an Occupational Therapist and have been licensed for 11 years in Rhode Island.

I am writing in support of H7945 The Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact.
Thank you for the opportunity to share my view on this important legislation.

I believe this bill is good for RI. It will:

- streamline the application process for those seeking practice privileges in other states through a centralized system
- allow greater mobility for Occupational Therapy providers between states or working in more than one state
- Support military members who are relocating or others who change their primary state of residence frequently
- Facilitate options for telehealth for those in more rural areas or who are homebound or living in border communities in our nearby states
- improve information sharing among member states in regulating Occupational Therapy practice
- preserve Rhode Island's current licensure law, rules and regulations, and authority over Occupational Therapy practice

The Occupational Therapy Compact has the potential to address the workforce crisis in health care by making it easier to obtain a privilege to practice in RI. It supports providers and encourages talented individuals to become part of Rhode Island's rehabilitation team. More importantly it will offer increased access to needed Occupational Therapy Services for our clients.

In my personal experience, I have also been licensed in Occupational Therapy in Massachusetts since 2021 due to having worked for a home care company which served both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. I feel like reciprocal licensure among states would be an easier solution to practice occupational therapy since the licensing boards request the same information. I feel like the compact would especially be helpful for occupational therapists in Rhode Island which is the smallest state and nestled between Massachusetts and Connecticut.

So far 28 States have enacted OT compact legislation. 7 have introduced legislation, and several others are considering or beginning to introduce legislation including our neighbors in the Tri-State area and New England.

Please help us to make Rhode Island the 29th state by approving H7945.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather Saakov
69 Brookside Drive
East Greenwich RI 02818

Sent from my iPhone