



February 23, 2023

The Honorable Edith McClafferty  
1301 East Sixth Avenue  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620-8201

RE: Assistant Licensure; SB 300

Dear Senator McClafferty:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to express support for SB 300, which requires licensure of audiology and speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 223,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 500 ASHA members reside in Montana.<sup>1</sup>

In 2021, HB 210 was passed, which established licensing for audiology assistants and SLPAs. However, because of the lack of a licensing exam, passage of SB 300 is needed. The enactment of SB 300— along with the passage of regulations—would allow the Montana Board of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists to develop updated language leading to the issuance of licenses for audiology assistants and SLPAs. ASHA supports employing appropriately supervised and trained audiology assistants and SLPAs as long as they are working under the supervision of licensed audiologists and speech-language pathologists. Use of assistants can help alleviate shortages of practitioners and decrease the list of responsibilities currently falling on audiologists and SLPs in Montana who are serving those with critical needs in a variety of settings. Currently, 17 states license support personnel outside of school settings, while 10 states regulate support personnel solely in school settings.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for helping to further ensure that the citizens of Montana have access to hearing and speech services, which will help them participate in daily living activities and maximize their engagement in social situations. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director, state association relations, at [ecrowe@asha.org](mailto:ecrowe@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Augustine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP  
2023 ASHA President

<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Montana* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/montana-state-flyer.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *Support Personnel Excluding School Settings*. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/support-personnel-excluding-school-settings.pdf>.