

Hello, my name is [Insert Name and organization]. I am testifying in support of [Insert Bill Number]. I would like to express my appreciation for your consideration of the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, the OT Compact. This measure is a joint initiative of the American Occupational Therapy Association and the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is the national professional association established in 1917 to represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students, and to improve the quality of occupational therapy services. The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT®), is a national not-for-profit organization that provides certification for occupational therapy professionals. NBCOT develops, administers, and continually reviews its certification process based on current and valid standards that provide reliable indicators of competence of occupational therapy practice. Above all else, NBCOT's mission is to serve the public interest.

The OT Compact utilizes a “mutual recognition” model of interstate practice, whereby Compact member states agree to “recognize” valid licenses issued by other member states. This approach is made possible by the fact that core licensure requirements for Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants are virtually the same across all 50 states. To utilize the Compact, an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant must have a license in good standing in their home state—their primary state of residence—and the home state must be a member of the OT Compact. When a licensee wants to work in another member state (known as a “remote state”), the licensee obtains a “compact privilege” from the OT Compact Commission, the interstate body composed of member state officials tasked with administering the Compact upon its enactment by ten states. A compact privilege is equivalent to a license to practice occupational therapy in the remote member state.

The OT Compact preserves the regulatory authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. Unlike national licensure initiatives that supersede state regulatory authority, interstate occupational licensure compacts allow a member state to continue to determine the

requirements for licensure in that state, as well as to maintain that state's unique scope of practice for all members of a profession practicing in that state, whether through a state-issued license or through a compact privilege.

We don't anticipate substantial additional costs for states participating in the Compact. There may be a cost for additional software required to connect to the Compact's interstate licensure data system as well as cost(s) associated with the attendance of your state's chosen Commissioner to the annual in-person OT Compact Commission meeting once the Compact is enacted in ten states. If it joins the Compact, [State Name] may see a potential loss of revenue from practitioners currently licensed in [State Name] who may opt to obtain a compact privilege instead. However, the OT Compact allows member states to offset any loss of revenue by charging an appropriate fee for the compact privilege. There will also be a potential increase in the number of licensees in [State Name], as practitioners who reside in, but are currently not licensed in [State Name] because they work elsewhere, may choose to obtain a license in [State Name] in order to access the Compact, as required, through their primary state of residence.

The OT Compact has many benefits for [State Name]:

- Improves access to occupational therapy providers;
- Increases choice of occupational therapy providers;
- Preserves the existing state-based licensure system;
- Creates an alternative path to licensure for compact privilege holders who change their primary state of residence between two compact member states;
- Improves communication between states:
 - Mandates full participation in a licensing and disciplinary data system
 - Ensures that all adverse actions and disciplinary sanctions are reported regularly to Commission and shared with member states;
 - Facilitates sharing of investigatory information.
- Requires criminal background checks;
- Improves continuity of care for the citizens of [State Name];
- Improves licensure portability for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants;
- Facilitates alternate delivery methods such as telehealth:
 - Simplifies and speeds up the current process;
 - Addresses portability and barriers to access;
 - Ensures the understanding that practice of occupational therapy occurs in the state where the client is located at the time.

- Requires continuing education for all who practice under the Compact;
- Improves portability for military spouses:

According to the Department of Defense, Military families move every three years on average. The Compact helps military spouses relocate and begin work without delay by reducing the amount of time and effort needed to gain authorization to practice in a new state, even as compared to expedited licensure laws for military spouses. It takes only a few minutes to obtain a compact privilege from the Commission's web site. As a member of the Compact, [State Name] may become a more attractive option to call home for a military family with an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant: military spouses will have peace of mind that with [State Name] as their home state, they will always be able to move to another OT Compact member state without encountering barriers to practice.

Overall, the OT Compact will support military families, improve access to and continuity of care for [State Name] residents, and increase license portability for occupational therapy professionals based in [State Name], while maintaining the current system of state licensure. Additionally, by ensuring the sharing of investigative and disciplinary information among member states, the OT Compact will allow member state regulatory entities to better protect the public.