

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-71

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

June 6, 2023

To recognize the need to honor dedicated speech-language pathologists, thank the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and speech therapy awareness and advocacy groups for their selfless work, and declare May 18, 2023 as Speech Language Pathologist Appreciation Day in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, communication serves as a litmus test of how humans process information, and is the key to maintaining relationships, improving literacy rates, and expressing one's thoughts, emotions, aspirations, and ideas;

WHEREAS, Speech Language Pathologists are trained healthcare providers that work with patients whether they are in school, the hospital, senior living facilities, the patient's home or their private clinic office;

WHEREAS, Speech Language Pathologists, nationwide and within the District, prevent, detect, assess, and treat adults, children and teens with a stutter, dysarthria, hearing loss and impairment, ADHD, ADD, autism, swallowing disorders, selective mutism, dyslexia, and those with speech impairments from traumatic brain injuries and strokes;

WHEREAS, according to American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), 90% of Speech Language Pathologists in the United States are women;

WHEREAS, whether Speech Language Pathologists provide treatment or conduct clinical research, they are essential in providing those with communication disorders and hearing loss with the tools necessary for success;

WHEREAS, according to ASHA, over 40 million Americans have dyslexia, 37 million Americans report trouble hearing, and 3 million Americans stutter, but most go undiagnosed;

WHEREAS, according to ASHA, nearly 5% of children have a noticeable speech disorder by the time they enter the first grade in the United States;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Health, white children with a voice, speech, language, or swallowing disorder are more likely to have received intervention services in the past 12 months compared to Black and Hispanic children;

WHEREAS, children of families with low income are more likely to have speech and language disorders than the general population;

WHEREAS, over 125,000 children live in the District of Columbia, and there are 825 speech language pathologists licensed by District of Columbia Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology;

WHEREAS, families and those seeking individual therapy outside of school for speech language disorders have three speech therapy providers to choose from in Ward 2, four providers in Wards 3 and 6, five providers in Ward 5, and none in Wards 7 and 8;

WHEREAS, under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the District is dedicated to supporting children and adolescents between 0-21 with quality early intervention services and special education services, bolstering the Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program, and ensuring that residents of low-income households have a clear pathway to speech therapy providers;

WHEREAS, the scholarship, selflessness, and zeal of the District's speech language pathologists has shepherded those with speech, voice, language, swallowing, and hearing disorders on the path to success;

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Speech Language Pathologist Appreciation Day Recognition Resolution of 2023".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the need to honor dedicate speech-language pathologists, thank the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and speech therapy awareness and advocacy groups for their work, and declare May 18, 2023 as Speech Language Pathologist Appreciation Day in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.