

# ASHA Legislative Advocacy Success in Virginia

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Jaime Van Echo, MS, CCC-SLP

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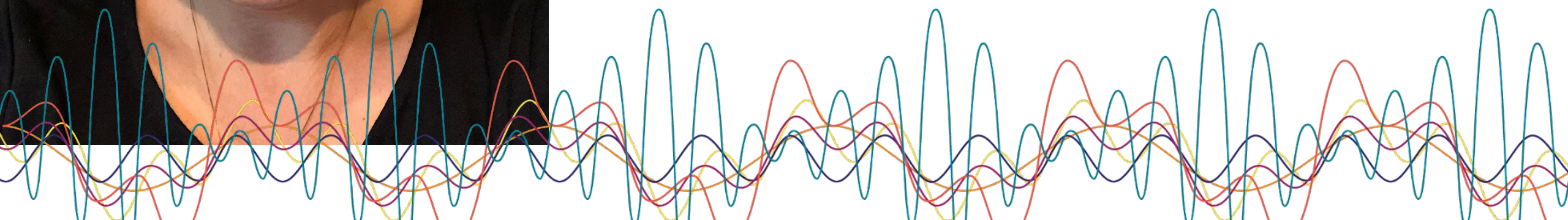
# **Jaime Van Echo, MS CCC-SLP**

Associate Director, Clinical Issues in  
Speech-Language Pathology

## **Disclosures**

Financial: Receive salary from the American  
Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Non-Financial: Prince William County Schools  
Superintendent appointed committee member





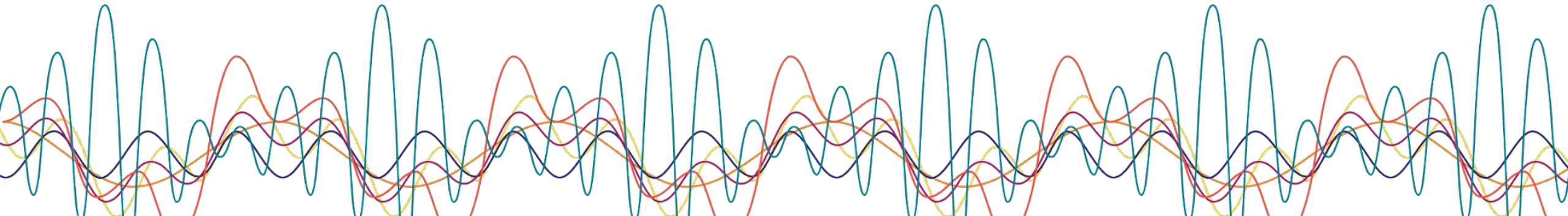
# **Susan Adams, Esq., CAE**

Director, State Legislative & Regulatory Affairs

## **Disclosures**

Financial: Receive salary from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Non-Financial: Serve as ex-officio to Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact, Executive Committee



# Agenda

**Importance of Advocacy**

**How to Be an Advocate**

**Member Success Story: ASLP-IC in Virginia**

**ASLP-IC Current Status**

**Advocacy Partners**

**Advocacy Tips**

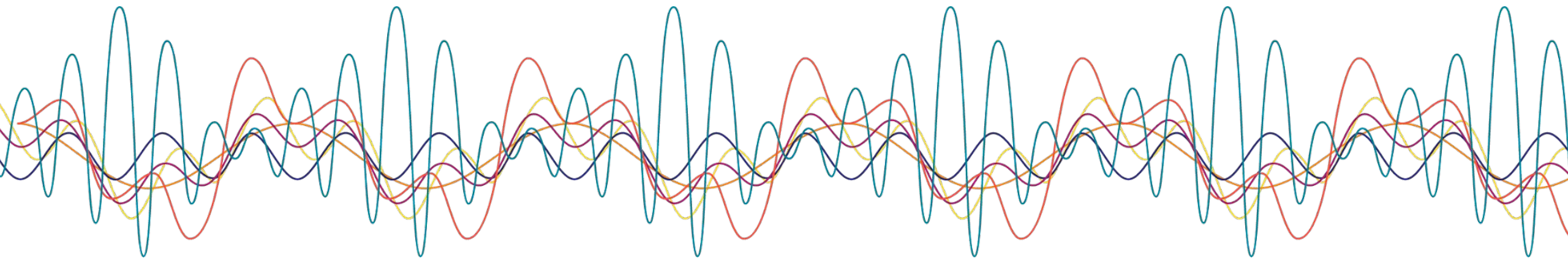


# Advocacy. What is it?

- What is Advocacy?
- Why is Advocacy Essential?

# What is Advocacy?

**Advocacy** is the essential and necessary means by which ASHA and affiliated state associations support and advance the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology in the areas of public policy, political action and popular opinion



# Why is Advocacy Essential?

Advocacy is used to...

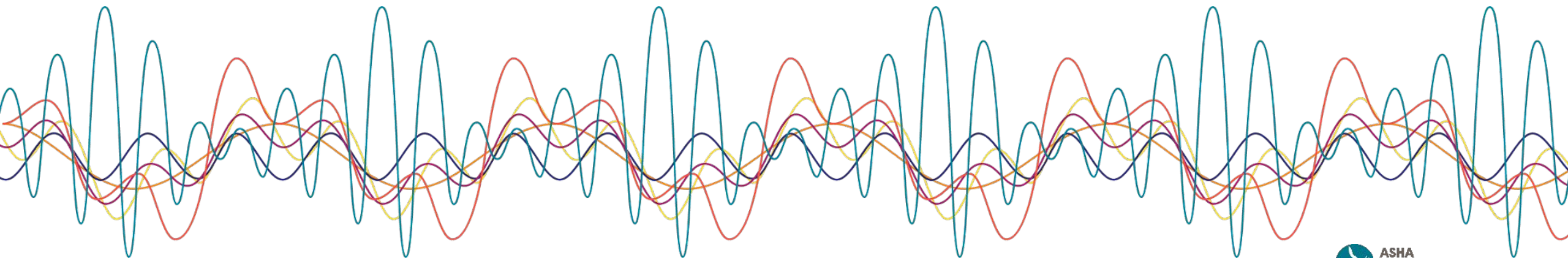
- Educate
- Inform
- Persuade

...for the purpose of advancing public policy priorities

# Why is Advocacy Necessary?

Former Speaker of the House James Wright (D-TX) said it best about why advocacy is necessary...

*“If you are wondering whether or not to communicate your views..., consider that others who disagree with you are doing so constantly.”*

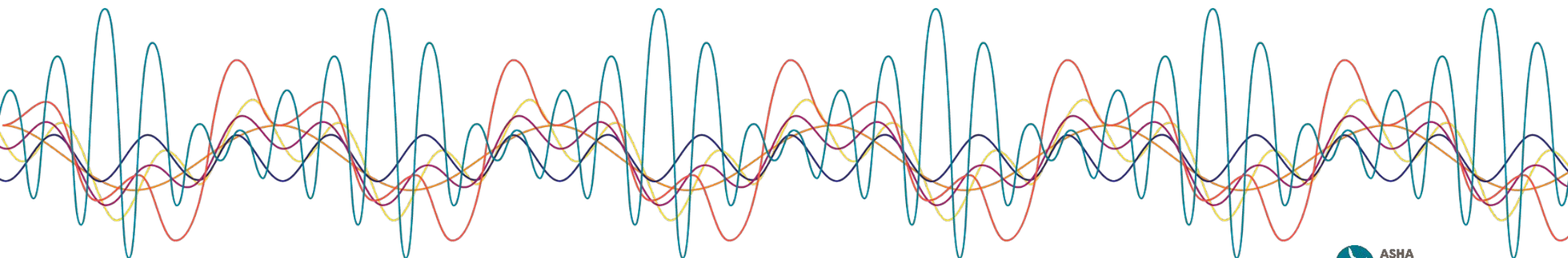




# Why is Advocacy Necessary?

Former Senator Mike Enzi's (R-WY) response to the need to be involved was...

*"If you're not at the table, you're on the menu"*





# How ASHA Approaches Advocacy

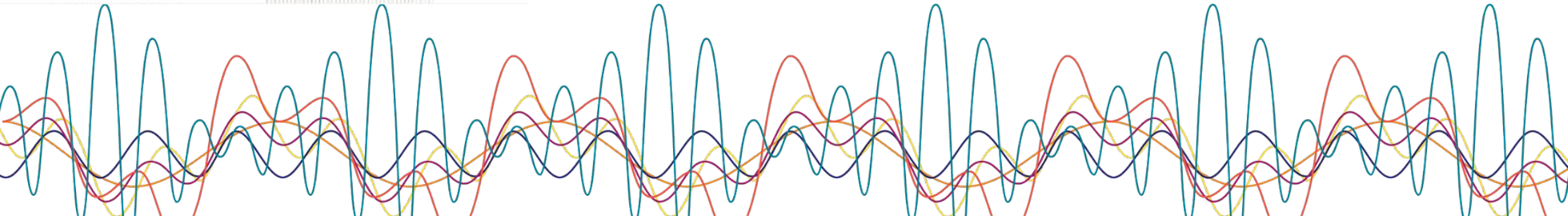
- 2024 Public Policy Agenda
- Input from State Associations
- Trending Issues

## Advocacy Priorities for Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists



# ASHA Advocacy

- ASHA **Public Policy Agenda** identifies the public policy issues that are of particular importance to the professions...
- Available at [ASHA.org/Advocacy](https://www.asha.org/Advocacy)



# 2024 Public Policy Agenda

## Workforce Priorities

Grow and  
diversify the  
workforce

Promote safe  
working  
environments

Support  
salary  
supplements

Expand  
advocacy  
tools

Ensure  
appropriate  
support for  
members

# 2024 Public Policy Agenda

## Payment and Coverage Priorities

Pursue equitable  
funding

Include members  
in emerging health  
care delivery  
systems

Expand  
permanent  
coverage of  
telehealth services

# 2024 Public Policy Agenda

## Service Delivery and Access Priorities

Support  
anti-discriminatory  
policies and  
practices

Promote screenings  
for hearing loss and  
communication  
disorders

Operationalize the  
ASLP-IC

# How You Inform This Process

- ASHA routinely solicits input on public policy from state associations and members
  - ASHA Board of Directors
  - Council of State Association Presidents
  - Membership committees (and SIGs)
  - General member feedback
- We are seeking to make this process more formal and strategic

# Trending Issues

**ASHA's State Affairs Team focuses on issues trending in the states**

- Still reflect PPA
- Solely focused on state issues that could be overlooked without special attention
- ASHA state team members each have responsibility for different topics







# Becoming an Advocate

- You have more power than you realize
- Issues affecting the professions
- Opportunities for participation

# You Have More Power Than You Realize

- According to the Congressional Management Foundation, in-person issue visits from constituents are the biggest influence on a member of Congress' decision-making.
- 97% of surveyed congressional staff believe constituent visits to DC have “some” or “a lot” of influence on an undecided member of Congress.
- 90% of congressional staff believe responding to constituent communications is a high priority to their office.
- ASHA is only as powerful as you make us.

# Professional Participation

- Your participation is very important!
- Audiologists and SLPs spend much of their time being an advocate — not only for your clients but for yourself.
- Members are constantly impacted by decisions made by state and federal legislators.
- When members contact Congress and their state legislators, they provide them with vital information legislators need to make public policy decisions.



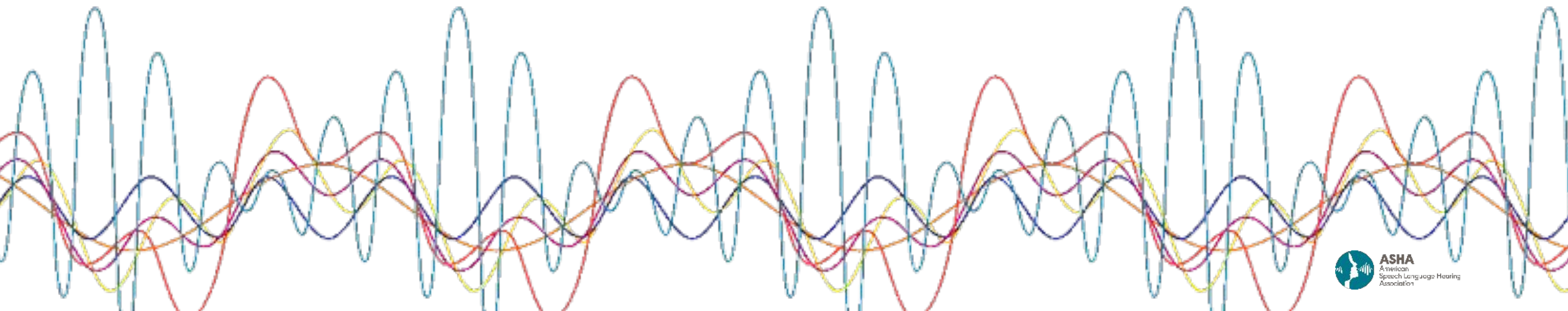
# ASLP-IC in Virginia

# ASLP-IC



**Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology**  
Interstate Compact

# House Bill 2033



# Connecting to Delegate

December

Delegates are looking for bill ideas.

Sponsoring a bill that becomes law is a huge success to a delegate.



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# HB 2033

Jaime connected ASHA with Delegate Sewell

Collaboration with  
Department of Defense

Public hearings and open public  
comments online

- Waiting....committee hearings...voting...waiting

**We did it!**

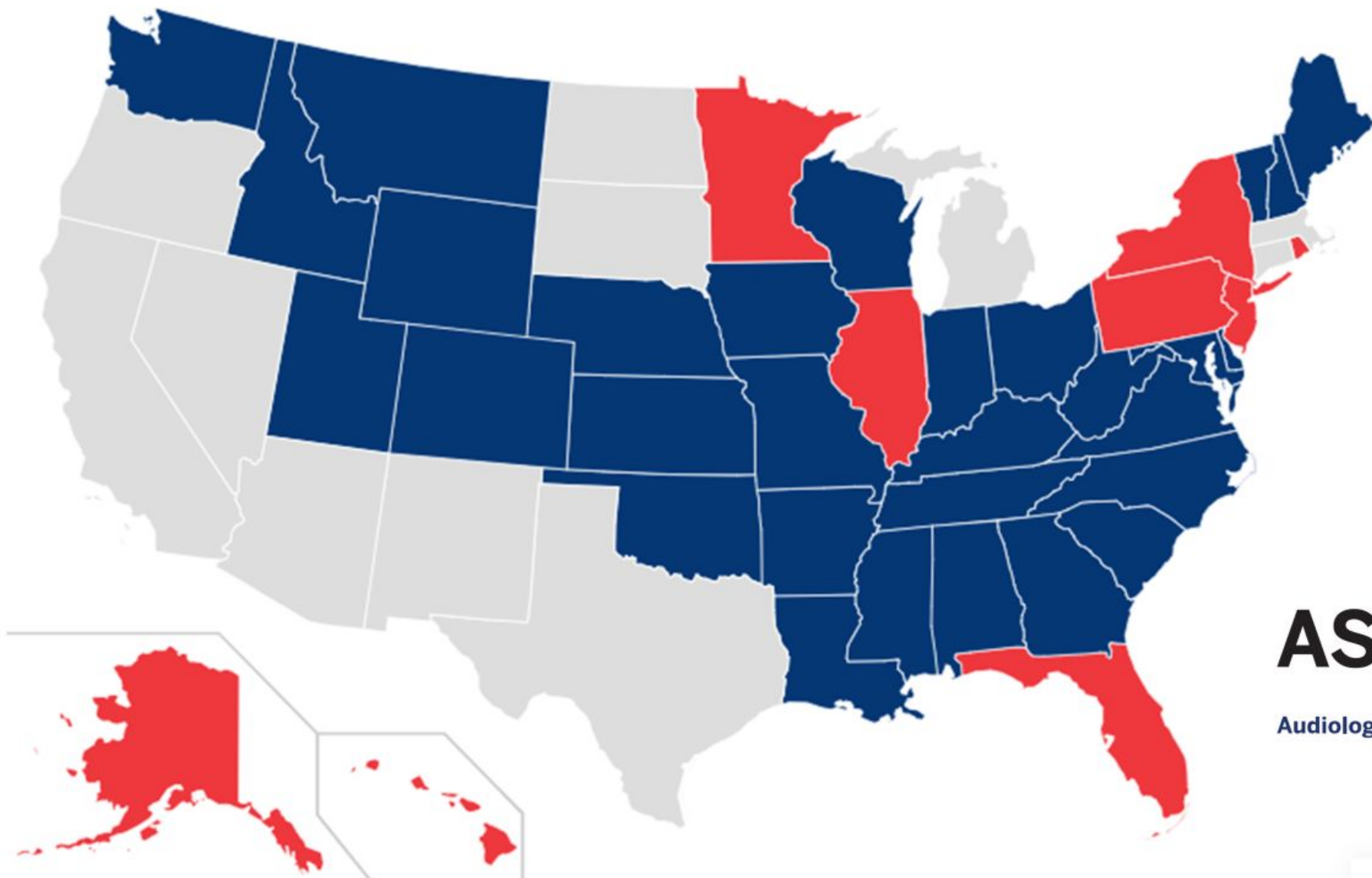
HB 2033, signed into law in  
spring of 2023.



Pictured from left to right

Craig Crenshaw, Virginia Secretary of Veterans and  
Defense Affairs; Del. Briana Sewell; Susan Adams, ASHA  
Director of State Legislative and Regulatory Affairs; and  
Virginia Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears.





# ASLP-IC

Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology  
Interstate Compact



Not Introduced

Legislation Pending

Legislation Enacted

# ASLP-IC Next Steps

- Develop data system and get member states connected
  - Vendor expects to have viable product within 6 months of contract signing
  - ETA: Late 2024/early 2025
- Lobby Congress to pass SHARE Act to ensure Commission has access to background check determinations (TAKE ACTION at: <https://www.votervoice.net/iframes/ASHAaction/Campaigns/101919/Respond>)
- Assume responsibility for ongoing financial operation of the ASLP-IC (how fees will be structured and collected)

# How Can You Stay Informed?

- Executive Committee Meeting
  - Fourth Monday of each month at 4:00 PM ET
- Finance Committee Meeting
  - First Friday of each month at 12:00 PM ET
- Rules Committee Meeting
  - Second Thursday of each month at 2:30 PM ET

All meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are shared at: <https://aslpcompact.com/>

# When will the Compact be up and running?

- The decision on the vendor will be made in the next month
- Vendor expects to have viable product within 6 months
- Work with states to connect and operationalize
  
- ETA: Late 2024/early 2025

# Advocacy in the Commonwealth



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# Agencies to consider for advocacy opportunities

- [ASHA Grasstops Envoy](#)
- [SHAV Advocacy](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#)
- [The Arc of Virginia](#)
- [Disability Law Center of Virginia](#)
- [GovTrack.us: Tracking the U.S. Congress](#)
- Local Community Service Board (CSB)
- Local School Board

# The Elevator Pitch



Identify your role, could be in a group or you could be alone



Clearly and succinctly state the main reasons why you are there; include any current legislation that you hope to influence



Clearly state the greatest impact of the legislation



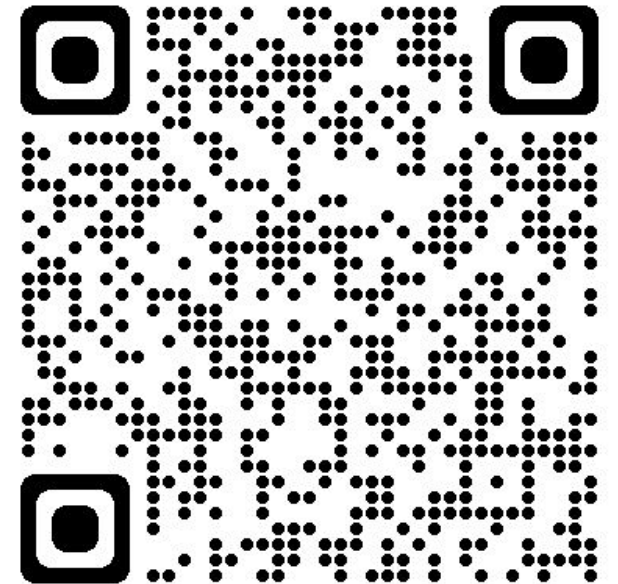
Show pictures if relevant



Provide contact information for follow up



Send an email summary with contact information



[ASHA Member Advocacy](#)

# Get to the point

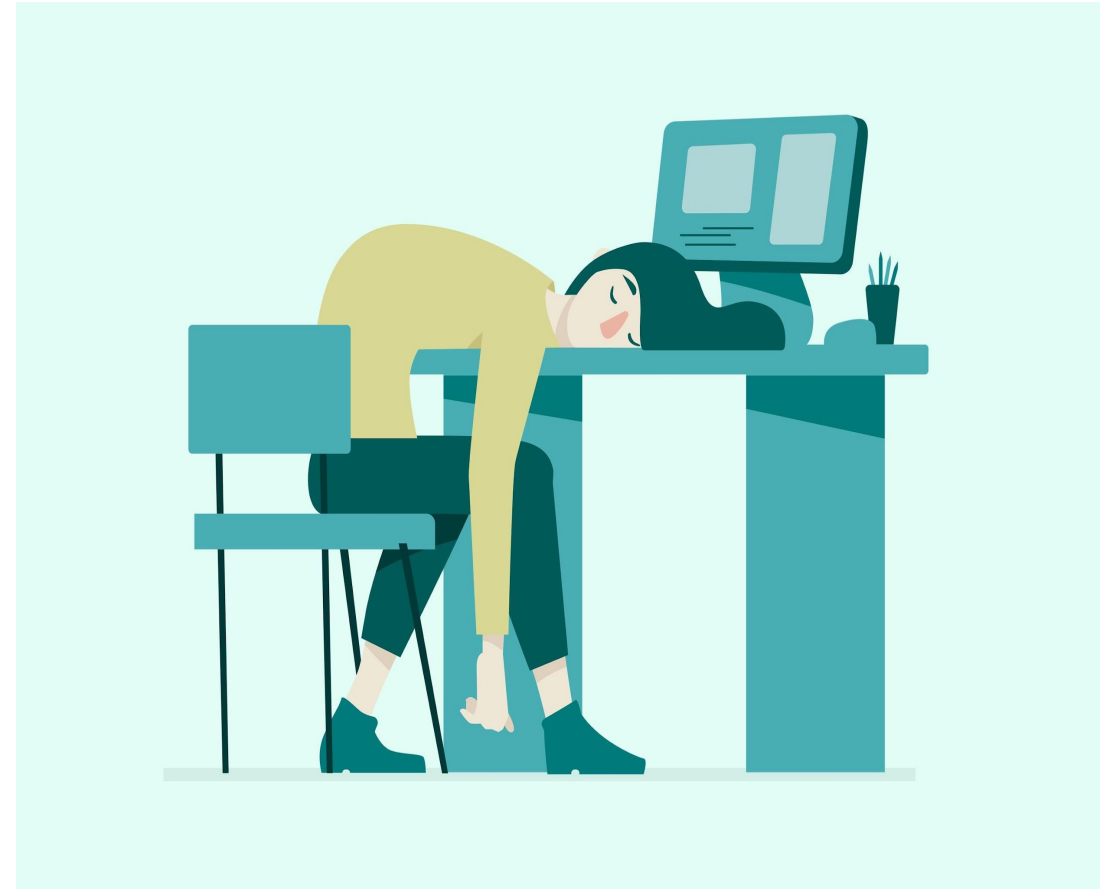
- I am a speech-language pathologist. I am also the spouse of a Marine.
- I work with people who communicate differently and need services to develop communication skills.
- My career was negatively impacted by licensure laws that required costly fees and extended wait times to practice.
- The interstate licensure compact would have allowed me to practice without licensure barriers when we moved from state to state on military orders.
- Interstate compacts would improve healthcare access to Virginians and to military families needing continued care by increasing the number of SLPs and Audiologists licensed to provide services in Virginia.
- Voting yes for HB 2033 supports military families, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and Virginians.





# Finding time

- Many organizations have a “Take Action” link that saves time
- Create calendar reminder or sign up for email reminders
- Stick with just one organization to start
- Create one relationship with an elected official



**“Fight for the things that you  
care about.  
But do it in a way that will lead  
others to join you.”**

- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

# Advocacy Opportunities

Follow ASHA Advocacy on Facebook (@ASHAAdvocacy) and X (@ASHAAdvocacy)

## Participate in ASHA Advocacy

- <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/takeaction/>
- Become a grasstops envoy:  
<https://www.asha.org/advocacy/become-a-grasstops-envoy/>

## Participate in SHAV Advocacy

- <https://shav.org>

# Advocacy Opportunities

**Sign up for ASHA Headlines to receive Your 60-Second Advocacy Update:**

<https://www.asha.org/publications/ASHA-Headlines/>

**Learn about ASHA-PAC:** <https://www.asha.org/advocacy/pac/>

**Student Advocacy:**

<https://www.nsslha.org/programs/legislative-advocacy/>

# Questions?





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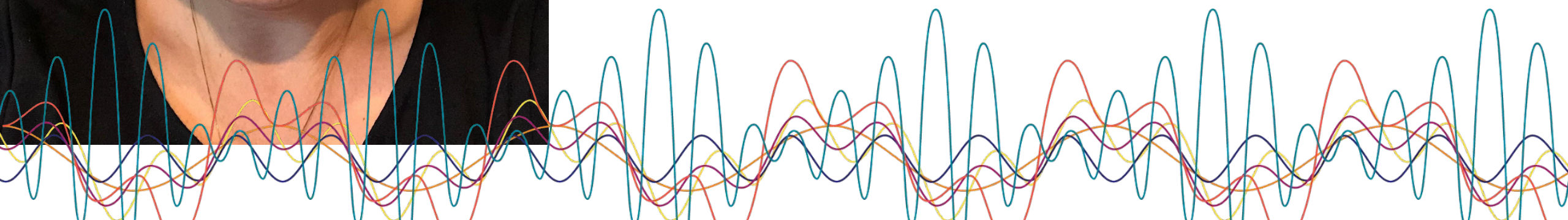
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