

Advancing Occupational Therapy Through Advocacy And The Legislative Process

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Objectives

- 1. Participants will be able to describe the relevance of advocating for occupational therapy in legislative issues.**
- 2. Participants will understand the various ways to advocate and the importance of relationship building with legislators.**
- 3. Participants will understand how to communicate with legislators.**
- 4. Participants will gain empowerment to participate in grassroots advocacy for the profession.**

Why is a Advocacy Essential for OT?

- ★ Occupational therapy is not fully understood in the political arena where health care, education, & funding decisions are being made.
- ★ Occupational therapy must have an advocacy and political presence to protect the practice of occupational therapy and access to services for our clients.
- ★ Legislative Policies at the Federal and State Level:
 - affect payment
 - access to occupational therapy services
 - employment for occupational therapy practitioners

Comparing Federal and State Structure

Executive-Legislative-Judicial

FEDERAL

STATE

<u>Executive</u>	<u>Legislative</u>	<u>Judicial</u>
President	Congress	Supreme Court
Vice President	Senators	U.S. Court of Appeals
Cabinet	House of Reps.	U.S. District Courts
Federal Agencies		

<u>Executive</u>	<u>Legislative</u>	<u>Judicial</u>
Governor	General Assembly	State Supreme Court
Lt. Governor	Senators	State Court of Appeals
Cabinet	House of Reps.	State Circuit Court
Attorney General		

AOTA Federal Affairs. (2020). Used with Permission

AOTA Federal Affairs.(2020). Used with Permission

Legislative Branch-Relevant Committees

FEDERAL LEVEL-U.S.

117th Congress

Assembly

Appropriations

Education & Workforce

Energy & Commerce

Ways & Means

Finance

HELP-Health, Education, Labor & Pensions

STATE LEVEL-Illinois

102nd General

*Currently in development since
the November 2020 Election*

Previous committees include:

Licensure

Health and Human Services

Appropriations

FEDERAL-Legislative Branch-Relevant Committees

HOUSE

- Appropriations
 - Spends money.
- Education & the Workforce
 - Education Policies
- Energy & Commerce
 - Economic Policies/Medicare
- Ways & Means
 - Tax Policy/Medicare

SENATE

- Appropriations
 - Gives out the money.
- Finance
 - Taxes & \$\$
 - Social Security & Medicare/Medicaid (one of the most powerful)
- Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP)

How ILOTA and AOTA Advocate for OT

- AOTA's Federal Affairs Department cultivates relationships with Members of Congress.
 - Through in-person meetings with Members of Congress, Congressional Staff or Committee Staff we help you protect and promote OT.
- ILOTA supports and encourages practitioners around the state to write to and meet with their elected officials
- Track Committee Actions and Bills
- Work with Coalitions to support and promote legislation.
- Practitioners and lobbyists attend events that support legislators

Current AOTA Public Policy Priorities

- Preserving and expanding access to OT services under Medicare and Medicaid
- Ensuring OT continues as a valued service to meet students' needs in schools
- Ensuring OT is part of new and innovative health programs that address societal needs such as: pain rehabilitation, community mental health services, telehealth, falls prevention, dementia care, and chronic conditions
- Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act
- Responding quickly to any new legislative challenges and opportunities

AOTA Congressional Successes & Ongoing Efforts

Successes:

Home Health

Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act

IDEA Waivers

Fight Cuts to Occupational Therapy Reimbursement Values

Telehealth

Protections for Independent Contractors

Student Loan Relief

Ongoing Advocacy:

Make Recent Telehealth Expansions Permanent

Include OT as part of Amputee Research Legislation

Fight Cuts to Occupational Therapy Reimbursement Values

Access to Personal Protective Equipment

Inclusion of Occupational Therapy Practitioners as Frontline Health Workers

Increased Funding for Early Intervention Services and Special Education

AOTA Federal Affairs. (2020). Used with Permission

Current Illinois Legislative Priorities

Telehealth

ILOTA is lobbying IL Senate to pass a bill allowing OT Telehealth services to be fully reimbursed after PHE. The ILOTA Advisory Group is working to support these efforts ([Executive Order 2020-09 Telehealth](#))

Hippotherapy: SB1420 Riding Therapy

ILOTA is lobbying against this bill that seeks to allow non-therapists to bill insurance for riding therapy. The bill is in review now. ILOTA will continue to lobby against the bill.

School Based OT Licensure

ILOTA is forming a work group to advocate for School-Based OTs to be considered Student Support Personnel and open up doors for administrative roles.

Medicaid Expansion Possibilities

ILOTA will be involved as Illinois looks at revision of benefits and services as regards to the **SDOH**.

Advocacy By the Numbers

- Policymakers listen to constituents
- Policymakers value the input of people in their community, and the opportunity to learn about their community
- You can share personal experiences that get to the heart of why OT is part of the solution

Advocacy By the Numbers

Make it *personal*. Make it *real*. Tell your story in your own words.

- People remember the story.
- Members care about their constituents experience.
- You are the expert on occupational therapy.
 - Short term advocacy
 - Long term relationship
- Stand apart from the forest
- Learn and Understand the Issue. You don't have to be an expert on legislation.

Advocacy By the Numbers

- How many people?
- Different issues need different numbers
- Small bill, low \$\$\$:
 - A small number of personalized letters;
 - 1 good meeting.
 - Goal: Cosponsor of bill. Several dozen cosponsors can move something.
- Big issue with big price tag:
 - Must hear from many constituents.
 - Must understand impact on constituents.
 - Need many Members voicing concern to their leadership to get movement

AOTA Federal Affairs. (2020). Used with Permission

Ways to Advocate

- Write a letter, call, or visit your legislator in their district or capitol office
- Invite a Legislator to your workplace
- Attend AOTA Hill Day and forthcoming ILOTA Legislative Day
- Volunteer at a campaign
- Attend fundraising events for your state and federal congress member
- Donate to ILOTPAC and AOTPCAC (membership required for each association in order to donate)

Advocacy Action Steps: Finding your Representatives

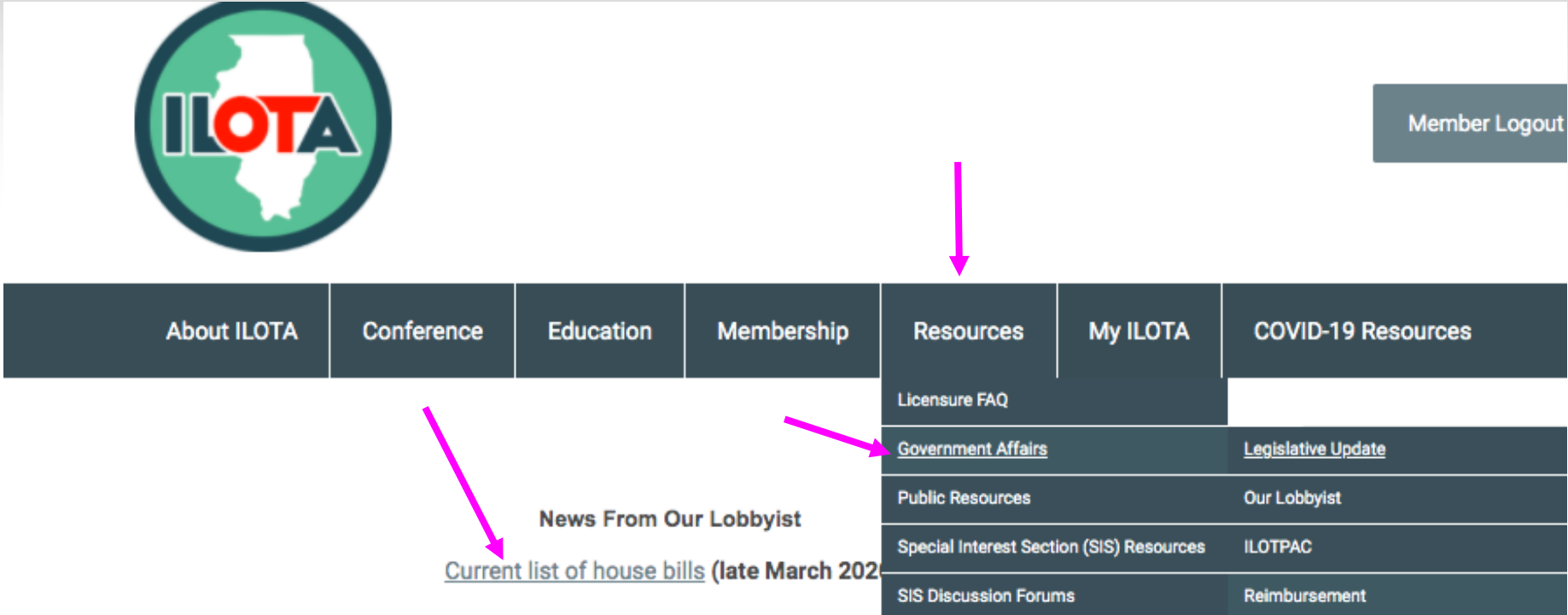
www.ilga.gov

www.elections.il.gov

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Illinois General Assembly website. The top navigation bar includes "SESSION SCHEDULE" with "SENATE Not In Today Next: 2/9/2021" and "HOUSE Not In Today". A search bar is present with "Search the 102nd General Assembly" and "By Number (example: HB0001)". A "Go" button and "Search Tips" link are also visible. The main content area is divided into several sections: "Legislation & Laws" (Bills & Resolutions, Public Acts), "Senate" (Members, Schedules, Committees, etc.), "House" (Members, Schedules, Committees, etc.), "Reports & Inquiry" (Legislative Reports, Special Reports, etc.), and "Additional Resources" (Legislative Support Services, etc.). A red arrow points to the "Legislator Lookup" link under the "Reports & Inquiry" section.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Illinois State Board of Elections website. The top navigation bar includes "Information For Voters", "Campaign Disclosure", "Running for Office", "Candidate Filing and Results", "Business Registration", "Press Room", and "About The Board". A blue banner below the navigation bar reads "View up to date information on Illinois' Covid-19 vaccine plan and vaccination eligibility from the State of Illinois Coronavirus Response Site". The main content area features a large background image of the State Capitol building. Three main service blocks are highlighted with red arrows: "Voter Services" (with sub-links for Online Voter Registration, Polling Place Locator, Find My Elected Officials (District Locator), and Voting By Mail Application), "News" (with sub-links for 1/11/2021 BOARD MEETING-JANUARY 19, 2021 and 12/31/2020 Adjustments to Contribution Limits - Effective January 1, 2021), and "Upcoming Events" (with sub-links for Next Election CONSOLIDATED PRIMARY Tuesday, February 23, 2021 and Next Board Meeting Wednesday, February 17, 2021).

ILOTA Advocacy: Website Supports



The screenshot shows the ILOTA website header and navigation menu. The ILOTA logo is in the top left, and a 'Member Logout' button is in the top right. The navigation menu includes 'About ILOTA', 'Conference', 'Education', 'Membership', 'Resources', 'My ILOTA', and 'COVID-19 Resources'. A pink arrow points to the 'Resources' menu item. Below it, a sub-menu is visible with items: 'Licensure FAQ', 'Government Affairs', 'Public Resources', 'Special Interest Section (SIS) Resources', and 'SIS Discussion Forums'. Another pink arrow points to the 'Government Affairs' sub-item, which has a further sub-menu containing 'Current list of house bills (late March 2022)', 'Legislative Update', 'Our Lobbyist', and 'ILOTPAC'. A third pink arrow points to the 'Current list of house bills (late March 2022)' link. A fourth pink arrow points to the 'News From Our Lobbyist' section, which is located below the navigation menu.

Member Logout

About ILOTA | **Conference** | **Education** | **Membership** | **Resources** | **My ILOTA** | **COVID-19 Resources**

Resources sub-menu:

- Licensure FAQ
- Government Affairs** sub-menu:
 - Current list of house bills (late March 2022)
 - Legislative Update
- Public Resources
- Special Interest Section (SIS) Resources
- SIS Discussion Forums

News From Our Lobbyist

Action Step: Writing to your Congressperson

Essential Tips for Writing to your Congressperson. Each letter should be:

Direct: State your subject clearly in the email subject line or the first sentence of the letter.

Informative: Identify yourself as a constituent, state your views, support them with knowledge, and cite the bill number (e.g. SB1420)

Inquiring: Ask for your representative's point of view and how they plan to vote on the relevant legislation.

Factual & Courteous: Rely on the facts, but personalize the issue. Explain how the issue affects your life.

Constructive: Be positive about your issue. Offer recommendations about how to address concerns.

Specific: Always explain the direct and local relevance of the issue.

Helpful: Offer to provide additional information if needed, and provide your contact information.

Appreciative: Thank the representative for their attention. Follow the issue and thank them later if they vote your way.

Concise: Keep your letter to one page, or your email to 500 words or less.

[Retrieved from APA.org](https://www.apa.org)

Example: ILOTA Draft Advocacy Letter

Dear Senator/Representative (),

I am a constituent in your district and work as an occupational therapist with children and families through the Early Intervention (EI) system. For the past several weeks in compliance with sheltering in place EI providers have been able to provide health care services via Live Video Visits (telehealth). Given the unknown nature of the COVID-19 pandemic it might not be possible to return to face to face EI services in the homes and communities of children and families in the foreseeable future. This has resulted in delays and significant reduction in services for children being seen for EI services which can have a long term impact on the health, development, and well-being of individual children if we are not able to continue with Live Video Visits (LVV).

I have personally provided Live Video Visits to several children and their families during the past 8 weeks and have seen the value of telehealth for this population of children. (Moved this first sentence to the beginning of this paragraph but feel free to move back to the end of the paragraph). For this reason I am encouraging you to pass SB27, the comprehensive telehealth legislation. If this is not possible, then I request that the ability to provide services via telehealth be extended through the end of the year and as an option for ongoing services within the state of Illinois. Thank you so much for your support of telehealth services to children during the pandemic and the eventual return to providing direct face to face early intervention services along with telehealth service delivery to children and families within the Early Intervention system.

Action Steps: Creating Witness Slips

What is a Witness Slip?

- A Witness Slip is a person or group's position on a particular bill (oppose or support).
- A Witness Slip can be filed by individuals on behalf of themselves, or on behalf of organizations.
- A Witness Slip can be filed for any bill scheduled for a hearing in the Illinois Senate or House Committee, a week prior to the hearing taking place

How Can I File A Witness Slip?

- A Witness Slip can be filed in person by attending the hearing in Springfield; OR
- A Witness Slip can be filed electronically at **www.ilga.gov** using the steps outlined in the link below:

[Step by step directions to complete a witness slip in Illinois](#) (Following Slides taken from this site)

Creating Witness Slips: Go to ilga.gov and select the GA Dashboard Link

<p>SESSION SCHEDULE</p> <p>SENATE Not In Today</p> <p>HOUSE Not In Today</p>	<p><u>Legislation & Laws</u></p> <p>Bills & Resolutions</p> <p>Public Acts</p> <p><u>Senate</u></p> <p>Members</p> <p>Schedules</p> <p>Committees</p> <p>Journals</p> <p>Transcripts</p> <p>Rules</p> <p>Audio/Video</p> <p>FOIA Information</p> <p>Media Guidelines</p> <p>Testimony submitted for Senate's May Session</p> <p><u>Reports & Inquiry</u></p> <p>Legislative Reports</p> <p>Special Reports</p> <p>My Legislation</p> <p>FTP Site</p> <p>GA Dashboard</p> <p>Previous General Assemblies</p> <p>Legislator Lookup</p> <p>Capitol Complex Phone Numbers</p>	<p>Illinois Compiled Statutes</p> <p>Illinois Constitution</p> <p><u>House</u></p> <p>Members</p> <p>Schedules</p> <p>Committees</p> <p>Journals</p> <p>Transcripts</p> <p>Rules</p> <p>Audio/Video</p> <p>FOIA Information</p> <p>House Employment Opportunities</p> <p>Submit testimony for House's May Session</p> <p><u>Additional Resources</u></p> <p>Legislative Support Services</p> <p>Legislative Ethics Training</p> <p>Discrimination & Harassment Information</p> <p>Legislative Inspector General Inquiries</p> <p>Joint Commission on Ethics and Lobbying Reform</p> <p><u>Rules & Regulations</u></p>
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Search the 101st General Assembly



By Number (example: HB0001)

[Search Tips](#)

By Keyword

[Search Tips](#)

[Advanced Search](#)



Creating Witness Slips: Create a login

**Illinois 101st General Assembly
ILGA Dashboard**

General Assembly:
101st G.A. (2019-2021) [Go]

- Home
- House
- Senate
- ILGA.GOV
- Help
- Register

Session Schedule

	Today	Scheduled
House	No Session Today	Next: No Day Scheduled
Senate	No Session Today	Next: No Day Scheduled

Today's House Committee Hearings

Date / Time	Committee
No records to display.	

Displaying items 0 - 0 of 0

Today's Senate Committee Hearings

Date / Time	Committee
No records to display.	

Displaying items 0 - 0 of 0

Creating Witness Slips: Login Allows You to Enter Your Profile Information

http://my.ilga.gov/WitnessSlip/Create/78905?committeeH... Witness Slip

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Illinois 98th General Assembly
Witness Slip

[Log On]

General Assembly:
98th G.A. (2013-2015)

Home
House
Senate
ILGA.GOV
Help
Register

ILLINOIS AMBER ALERT
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

RECORD OF COMMITTEE WITNESS - ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SB 2887	Executive Committee Committee
BILL OR RESOLUTION NUMBER	Tuesday, November 18, 2014 3:00 PM
	Other (Subject Matter): Unavailable

I. IDENTIFICATION

All fields are required unless noted as optional.

Name: John Doe
Address: 1234 Main Street
City: Everywhere State: IL Zip: 00000
Firm/Business Or Agency: none
Title: none
Email: witnessslip@filing.com
Phone: 123-456-789
Fax (Optional):

II. REPRESENTATION

This section is to be filled if the witness is appearing on behalf of a group, organization or other entity.

Creating Witness Slips: Select House or Senate

The screenshot shows the ILGA Dashboard website. At the top left is the Seal of the State of Illinois. The main heading reads "Illinois 98th General Assembly ILGA Dashboard". Below this, there is a "General Assembly:" section with a dropdown menu set to "98th G.A. (2013-2015)" and a "Go" button. A navigation menu on the left includes links for Home, House, Senate, ILGA.GOV, and About. The "Session Schedule" section features a table with columns for "Today" and "Scheduled". A green arrow points to the "House" row in the table, with the text "Click Here" written on it.

	Today	Scheduled
House	No Session Today	Next: 2/19/2013
Senate	Today: 11:00 AM	Next: 2/27/2013

Click Here

Creating Witness Slips: Select the Committee Hearings tab



Illinois 98th General Assembly ILGA Dashboard

General Assembly:

98th G.A. (2013-2015)

Go



Home



House



Members



Committees



Committee Hearings



Senate



ILGA.GOV



Session Schedule

	Today	Scheduled
House	No Session Today	Next: 2/19/2013
Senate	Today: 11:00 AM	Next: 2/27/2013



Today's House Committee Hearings

Time	Committee
display.	



Creating Witness Slips: Example of a Committee Action Schedule

Locate Bill Number and Click Create Witness Slip on the right

Electronic witness slips can be submitted up to the conclusion of the committee hearing.

House Executive Committee Hearing Details

Scheduled Date: 11/18/2014 - 3:00 PM
Location: Room 118 - Capitol Building - - Springfield, IL
Posting Date: 11/07/2014 - 3:49 PM

Items Posted To Hearing

[View Witness Slips](#) [Create Witness Slip](#)

Bill #	Sponsor Name	ABR - Short Description	Witness Slips
HB3639	Anthony DeLuca	VIDEO GAMING-TERMINAL OPERATOR	
HB3817 - HFA1	Elaine Nekritz		
SB726	Barbara Flynn Currie	LIQUOR CONTROL-0.5% ALCOHOL	
SB726 - HCA1	Barbara Flynn Currie		
SB1680 - HFA3	Michael J. Madigan		
SB2887	Elaine Nekritz	PENCD-SURS-ANNUITANT-CONDITION	
SB2933	Michael J. Madigan	PENS CD-DWNST POLICE-BOARD	

Displaying Items 1 - 7 of 7

Creating Witness Slips: Fill out the Witness Slip

ILLINOIS 98th General Assembly [Log On]

Illinois 98th General Assembly Witness Slip

General Assembly:
98th G.A. (2013-2015) [Go]

RECORD OF COMMITTEE WITNESS - ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 1053 BILL OR RESOLUTION NUMBER	Revenue & Finance Committee Committee Thursday, February 21, 2013 10:00 AM Other (Subject Matter): Unavailable
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IDENTIFICATION
Fields are required unless noted as optional.

Name: Mark D. Armstrong
Address: 719 S. Batavia Ave.
City: Geneva State: IL Zip: 60134
Firm/Business Or Agency: Kane County
Title: Supervisor of Assessments
Email: ArmstrongMark@co.kane.il.us
(A confirmation email will be sent if email address is provided.)
Phone: 630 - 208 - 3818
Fax (Optional): [] - [] - []

ILLINOIS AMBER ALERT
www.ilga.gov

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN
www.missingkids.com

Creating Witness Slips: Provide your opinion and then click “Create Slip”

II. REPRESENTATION

This section is to be filed if the witness is appearing on behalf of a group, organization or other entity.

Persons, groups firms represented in this appearance:

Position on the legislative items.

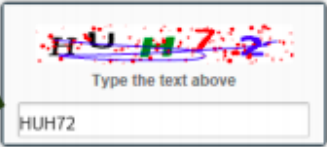
Original Proponent Opponent No Position On Merits

IV. TESTIMONY

Select the testimony types that you will supply for the hearing. (Check all that apply)

Oral Written Statement Filed Record Of Appearance Only

Enter Code Here

 Type the text above
HUH72

I Agree to the ILGA [Terms of Agreement.](#)





Example:

Witness Slips for SB1420 -

Riding Therapy

Bills & Resolutions

[Compiled Statutes](#)[Public Acts](#)[Legislative Reports](#)[IL Constitution](#)[Legislative Guide](#)[Legislative Glossary](#)

Search By Number
(example: HB0001)

[Search Tips](#)

Search By Keyword

[Search Tips](#)[Advanced Search](#)

Witness Slips For SB1420 *101st General Assembly*

[SB1420
Bill Status](#)

Legislation: SB1420

[Proponents: 46](#)[Opponents: 30](#)[No Position: 0](#)

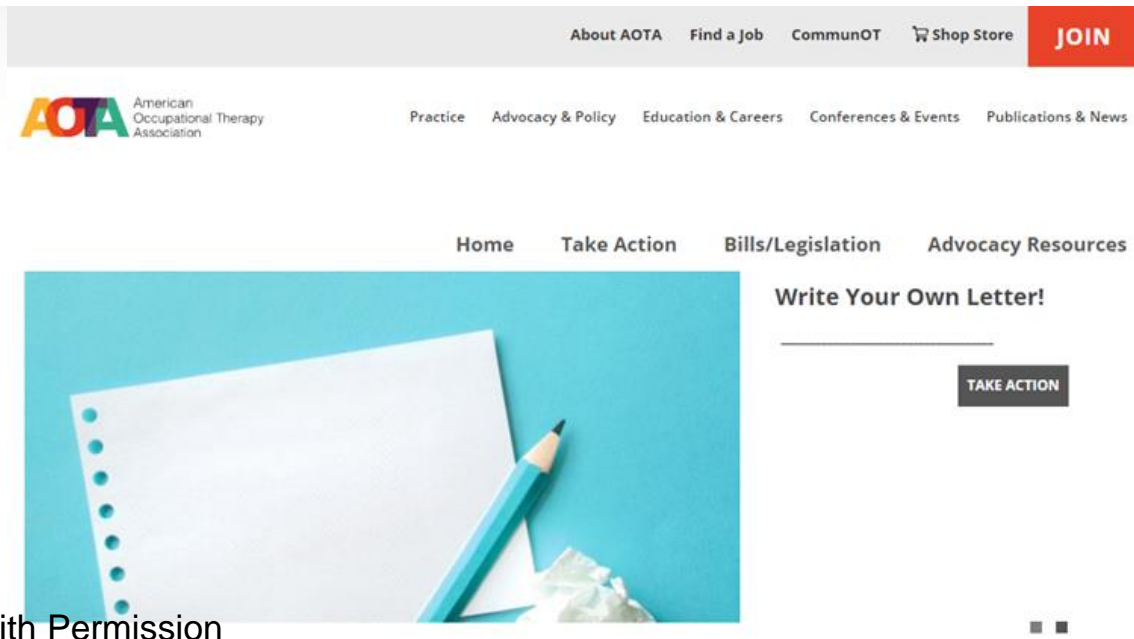
Name	Firm, Business Or Agency	Representing
Hearing Date and Time: Insurance (S) 2/19/2020 5:00 PM		
Bethany Heins	Self	Self
Brittany Giannoni	Main Stay Therapeutic Farm	None
Cindy Smiley	Self	Self
Danielle Kuhlman	Self	Self
David Nobbe	Horsemen's Council of Illinois	Horsemen's council of Illinois
David Nobbe	None	Illinois Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Foundation
Davino Giannoni	None	None
Debra Neuman	Equestrian Coalition of McHenry County	Equestrian Coalition of Mchenry County
Dr Jasmine Chao	Jasmine Wang Chao DO Ltd	Self
Edward Beauvais	NA	Heart & Soul Equine Foundation

How To Get Involved at the Federal Level

- Find your members of Congress
- Contact Congress using fully editable prewritten letters created by AOTA staff on various issues or write your own letter on any issue of import to you
- Research legislation
- View other AOTA resources on the latest issues

How To Get Involved at the Federal Level

www.aota.org/takeaction



The screenshot shows the AOTA website's navigation and main content area. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About AOTA', 'Find a Job', 'CommunOT', 'Shop Store', and a prominent red 'JOIN' button. Below this is the AOTA logo (American Occupational Therapy Association) and a secondary navigation menu with links for 'Practice', 'Advocacy & Policy', 'Education & Careers', 'Conferences & Events', and 'Publications & News'. The main content area features a sub-navigation bar with 'Home', 'Take Action', 'Bills/Legislation', and 'Advocacy Resources'. The 'Take Action' section is highlighted, featuring a large image of a teal pencil and a white notepad on a teal background. To the right of the image, the text 'Write Your Own Letter!' is displayed above a horizontal line, with a dark grey button labeled 'TAKE ACTION' below it.

Advocacy and Political Action at the National Level



Increased recognition through the political process
is a major step
to make occupational therapy thrive
and to prevent being shut out
If you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

Grassroots Advocacy

Social Media: Public and allows practitioners to communicate with each other

Email your elected official. It's builds numbers and it is personal.

Phone Call. Gets attention and allows you to share your story. Builds the relationship with the legislator's staff.

In person meetings. Hardest to do. Time consuming. Allows direct communication.

Want to Get Involved? Want More Information?

- **Next Steps:**

- ILOTA is looking for practitioners to share their telehealth success stories for the coalition
- Visit the IL General Assembly website (ILGA.gov) to familiarize yourself with your senator and representative
- Consider contacting your legislator by phone, letter, or email and introducing yourself. If they won re-election this past November, congratulate them.
- Invite your legislator to visit your workplace (when state mitigations are lifted)
- Attend upcoming fundraiser events or volunteer on a candidate's campaign

- **Who to Contact:**

Monika Robinson mrobinsonot@gmail.com

Brenda Koverman bkoverman5@gmail.com

Nancy Richman nzrichman@aol.com

Claudia Cirrincione cirrincionec.ot@gmail.com

Dawn Sonnier dalbarado@yahoo.com

Telehealth Talking Points

A NEED FOR PERMANENT ILLINOIS LEGISLATION FOR FUTURE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TELEHEALTH PRACTICE

Below are talking points requesting support for permanent implementation to ensure continued access to quality and affordable care through telehealth practice as initiated under the [COVID-19 Executive Order No. 7 \(EO 2020-09_3/18/20\)](#)

THE ILLINOIS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (ILOTA):

The ILOTA is a member of a [coalition of IL healthcare providers](#) that is requesting Illinois telehealth reform legislation to **ensure coverage parity and payment parity of telehealth services with in-person services** based on the coalition's identified guiding principles as they apply to typical occupational therapy practices:

1. Patients shall not be required to prove a hardship or access barrier in order to receive telehealth services.

1. State regulated public and private health plans shall provide payment and coverage parity for telehealth services in the same manner as for in-person covered services.

1. State regulated public and private health plans shall not:
 - a. Negotiate different contract rates for telehealth and in-person services;
 - b. Require in-network providers to offer or provide telehealth services;
 - c. Require patients to use telehealth services instead of receiving in-person services; and
 - d. Place conditions, treatment limitations and requirements on telehealth such as utilization management criteria, documentation or recordkeeping that are more restrictive or stringently applied than those established for in-person services.

Take Action: It's as Easy as ABCD

- ❖ **Act Now**
- ❖ **Be an AOTA and ILOTA member**
- ❖ **Contribute to the AOTPAC and ILOTPAC**
- ❖ **Do Grassroots communication-talk or write to your legislator**

In Conclusion



References

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