



**Jennifer Caswell, PT, DPT, APTA-Kansas Chapter Legislative Chair**

**Proponent Testimony on SB 491**

**February 19, 2024**

**Senate Judiciary Committee**

Madam Chair and Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas State Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 491. I am currently the legislative chair for APTA Kansas, the owner of a physical therapy clinic in Overland Park and serve as adjunct faculty at Rockhurst University.

It is the hope of APTA Kansas that enactment of SB 491 will help physical therapists and physical therapist assistants that are seeking to practice their profession more easily in Kansas. We understand that the changes made by SB 491 might resolve an ongoing barrier to the implementation of a separate effort that received overwhelming legislative support.

For your background, the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, or PTLC, is a state-based solution to the challenges of interstate licensure portability for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. It improves patient access to physical therapy services in the state of Kansas by giving eligible licensees in participating states an easier and faster alternative to traditional licensure, while retaining safeguards to protect the public.

In 2021, the PTLC was recommended by the House Health and Human Services Committee before being approved by the House 112-2 on March 3rd. Then the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee recommended the PTLC before it was inserted into the conference committee report on SB 170 which received a 40-0 Senate vote. On July 1st, 2021, SB 170 was effective.

Despite enactment of SB 170, Kansans have not been able to utilize the PTLC nor been able to issue privileges for those who wished to practice in Kansas. We have been told that we are required to fully implement a criminal background check requirement in accordance with the PTLC, which includes biometric-based information from each PT licensure applicant. This requirement was implemented by SB 170 and mirrored other professions background check requirements, however the FBI has yet to approve the procedures for this to begin.

There are currently many clinics and facilities, especially in rural Kansas, who desperately need physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. Unfortunately, we are losing the opportunity to enable well qualified out of state physical therapy professionals to care for patients in Kansas due to the burden of getting a full license versus utilizing their compact privileges.

In my role as adjunct faculty with Rockhurst University and my work with physical therapist and physical therapist assistant students across the state, I hear from many of them that they are considering living and working in the Kansas City metro area. For example, Missouri has adopted the PTLC and many graduates are planning to live in Missouri to take advantage of licensure portability. I believe that if SB 491 is enacted this legislation so that we do not miss out on similar opportunities for our state.

In summary, the PT Compact was passed in 2021 and we are still awaiting the final piece, which would finally allow implementation of criminal background checks. I kindly request your support as we seek a resolution to this matter so that Kansans can fully enjoy the benefits of the legislation previously approved of in 2021. Thank you very much for your time today in consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Caswell, PT, DPT". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Caswell, PT, DPT