

Erin Firmin for the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

**(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology?**

The Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology is an important body to guide and interpret regulations in order to answer questions from the field. To be a member of this board would allow me to actively participate in the progressive movement of these fields within the state of Hawaii. By remaining up-to-date with the most recent and relevant advances within the fields, the board will continue to ensure the provision of the highest level of care that our community deserves.

**(2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology?**

I believe that a member of the Board is responsible for providing guidance to Speech Pathologists and Audiologists regarding regulations and ethical practices in the state of Hawai'i. A Board member must also be able to collaborate with other professions, community members, and interested parties to assist in guiding decisions within the fields of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

**(3) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.**

As a Speech Pathologist working in the schools for over twenty-one years, I have been fortunate to work with individuals with a range of disorders and delays, which has allowed me to seek knowledge and hone skills in a wide variety of evidence-based therapies. I have also been able to work with families of individuals with communication difficulties and witness the direct impact a communication disorder has on a family unit. In order to provide individualized services for our students, we work with multidisciplinary teams to develop a program capitalizing on the student's strengths and addressing areas of need. Utilizing these professional experiences, along with the multiple positions I previously held with state and national professional organizations, I am able to listen and validate different perspectives and share about significant developments regarding the fields of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

**(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

As we have navigated the COVID pandemic and witnessed the impact on our community regarding access to care, I would like to bring to the board ideas and solutions to increase access for these necessary communication services. Hawai'i is also geographically and culturally unique, which provides for its own set of

challenges and opportunities for innovation in order to provide equitable access to care.

**(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology.**

- Collaborative – I am able to work well with others in order to accomplish a goal.
- Driven – I continuously strive to learn more and perfect my craft, which allows me to stay up-to-date.
- Honest – I strive to ensure that I make ethical decisions and live my life with integrity.

**(6) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology member.**

Currently, I am the chair of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology and participate in regular meetings. With the support of the other board members, we have been able to address multiple issues across the state and most recently, approved the provisional license process for speech-language pathologists. Previously, I have held various chair positions with the Hawai'i Speech-Language-Hearing Association and oversaw and participated in different committees in that association.

**(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?**

Working in the Department of Education, I work with a number of other Speech Pathologists. If there were pending disciplinary actions being held against a Speech Pathologist that I know personally, I would recuse myself from the discussion.

## **Testimony of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection  
Friday, February 18, 2022  
9:30 a.m.  
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
G.M. 625, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
TO THE BOARD OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, ERIN FIRMIN,  
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2023**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Fernandez, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (Board). The Board supports the confirmation of Ms. Erin Firmin's reappointment to the Board.

Ms. Firmin has been a licensed speech pathologist in Hawaii for nearly 10 years as well as a highly regarded and active member of that professional community. Prior to her appointment to the Board, Ms. Firmin was in a leadership role with the Hawaii Speech-Language-Hearing Association, which makes her very familiar with the nature of the services provided in Hawaii, but also the ways in which the public can be protected when utilizing those services. Outside of her duties on the Board, Ms. Firmin is currently serving as the Central District Speech-Language Pathologist Coordinator for the Hawaii Department of Education. In her position, Ms. Firmin plans, organizes, and provides technical assistance to school and district personnel, speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and communication aides (CAs). She also develops and evaluates state and federal policies, regulations, and guidelines for SLPs, which she utilizes together with her extensive professional knowledge in the coaching and mentorship of SLPs and CAs.

Ms. Firmin is aware of the various requirements of serving on the Board, including but not limited to regular meeting attendance, involvement, and understanding meeting procedures and also understands the importance of being dedicated to meeting preparation, which involves at its core, familiarity with the regulated fields, and the statute and administrative rule chapters associated with the functions of the Board. Ms.

Testimony of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology

G.M. 625

Page 2 of 2

Firmin continues to be ready to serve the public as Board Chairperson, and along with her peers on the Board, proud to protect the health, safety, and welfare of consumers of speech pathology and audiology.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

February 14, 2022

Dear Senator Baker and Members of the Committee,

It is a sincere pleasure to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Mrs. Erin Firmin, M.S., CCC-SLP. Mrs. Firmin has been nominated to serve on the Hawaii State Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I have had the privilege of working with Erin, an exemplary speech language pathologist, for the past several years.

Mrs. Firmin is accomplished and highly skilled in a variety of areas in our profession. She is certified to teach several Hanen programs focusing on parent education. The group of parents who participated in her course for parents of preschool students with Autism, learned strategies to improve interactions and language of their children. Additionally, those parents were able to form a network of support. At her school, Erin has successfully collaborated with teachers to implement work on narrative language in the preschool classrooms. Continuity of the profession is also an area of importance for Erin as she continuously volunteers to mentor graduate students in the profession.

Mrs. Firmin is also a professional with outstanding character. Displaying a strong work ethic, she willingly assists with all tasks given, consistently displaying a positive attitude. Erin also generously volunteers her time to both the Hawaii Speech Language Hearing Association (HSHA) and the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

The Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology could not have received a better candidate. I strongly support Mrs. Firmin's nomination to this board as an outstanding clinician, educator, and citizen.

Sincerely,

*Wendy G. Saka*

Wendy Saka, M.S., CCC-SLP

February 15, 2022

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230  
415 South Beretania St., Honolulu, HI. 96813

Re: Nomination of Erin Firmin, MS, CCC-SLP, to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology (GM 540)

Dear Senator Baker,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding the appointment of Erin Firmin to the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology. I fully support the confirmation of Erin's appointment to the Board.

I have worked as Erin's colleague in the Central District Student Support Services branch of the Department of Education for several years and have witnessed first-hand her dedication to her students, the schools that she serves, and to the profession of speech pathology itself. Erin has volunteered her knowledge and expertise on numerous occasions to help her speech pathologist colleagues by facilitating learning opportunities and creating resources to share with all members of the district. Most recently, she created and shared with all speech pathologists in the district a reference packet containing evidence-based practices and procedures for conducting preschool speech language assessments.

Erin also volunteers her time to supervise graduate student interns and mentor clinical fellows (speech pathologists in their first year on the job). She demonstrates excellent collaboration with teachers and other professionals and seeks to assist wherever she is needed.

I strongly support Erin's nomination to this board. She will bring dedication and compassion to those she serves. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me as listed below. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Matthew Muranaka, MS, CCC-SLP  
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