

# MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Nick Charles

FROM: J. Steven Wise  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 4, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 288 – *Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** House Bill 288.

House Bill 288 enters Maryland into the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. Like other Compacts, this would allow audiologists and speech-language pathologists to become licensed in a “home state” that is a member of the Compact, but to also practice in other “member states”. Physicians, namely otolaryngologists, work as a team with audiologists and are concerned about the impact this could have on the qualifications of audiologists and speech pathologists allowed to practice in the State. Unlike the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which provides an expedited process for a physician to become licensed in a State and subjects the physician to the scope of practice in each state, joining this Compact grants the privilege to practice in all states by being licensed in one state. The General Assembly should be certain that this significant difference in structure does not cede Maryland’s control over the scope of practice to the Compact Commission.

Similarly, the General Assembly last year adopted telehealth legislation. That legislation made clear that a provider is subject to the “appropriate standard of care” as determined by the governing board in this State. The proposed Compact, on the other hand, mandates that a provider may “practice audiology or speech-language pathology in any member state via telehealth under a privilege to practice as provided in the Compact and rules promulgated by the Commission.” See Section 5.A. This apparent conflict also needs to be considered thoroughly before the Compact is adopted.

Finally, MedChi believes that there should be a physician member of the Compact Commission under Section 8.B of the Compact.

For these reasons, MedChi opposes House Bill 288.

**For more information call:**

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