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January 26, 2021

Delegate Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 288: Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass,

I am writing to request your favorable report for HB 288: Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact.

I am a licensed speech-language pathologist who has worked in Washington DC, on a military base in Germany, and in Maryland for a total of 27 years. I am co-founder of a private practice in the Baltimore area, and our clinicians provided in-person sessions. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, clients and their families have seen the enormous time savings of virtual sessions. As parents see their children working on curriculum at home--witnessing the struggles they are having--our services have increased 30%. We have had more requests from families just over the state line in Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Virginia etc. During 2020, we experienced families who went to stay in another state for various reasons, and we had to cease working with the client just because they had traveled out of the state. This caused enormous disruption to the clients' progress.

Passage of SB 183 would authorize both telehealth and in-person practice across state lines in ASLP-IC states, which is similar in form and function to occupational licensure compacts for nursing, psychology, medicine, physical therapy and emergency medical services. From an administrative perspective, it enhances the exchange of licensure, investigative and disciplinary information between member states. Finally, passage of this (long-overdue) bill allows for the use of telehealth technology to facilitate increased access to audiology and speech language pathology services.

As of January 2021, the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact has been enacted in six states: West Virginia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Wyoming and

Utah.

Thank you for your consideration on behalf of individuals with communication, hearing and swallowing disorders and the therapists who serve them. I hope that you will give HB 288 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sawyer Lawrence, MA, CCC-SLP
CEO, InferCabulary