

January 30, 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 working both at a special education school, and in private practice. The bill would help me improve the continuity of care for my students as they cross state lines. In addition, it would improve access to more speech-language providers for students who live in rural areas.

At this time, when a licensed professional leaves one state to work in another, they must undergo the licensing process in their new state. This results in a lag in starting a job, increased expense for the practitioner and delays in receiving services for patients. Passage of HB 288 would address increased demand to provide/receive audiology and speech-language pathology services, because it would allow for the use of telehealth technology across state lines in ASLP-IC states. This would increase public access to audiology and speech-language pathology services by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses. The bill would enhance the states' ability to protect the public's health and safety through greater exchange of licensure, investigative and disciplinary information between member states.

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,

Colleen Roome Shelton, M.S., CCC-SLP

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