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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 speech-language pathologist with 26 years of experience. During that time, I have worked in Virginia and Maryland.

The recent pandemic has also posed challenges for families who may live along state lines and receive services across the stateline; they could not go to their usual therapist. This was also difficult for those whose children had been attending school in a different state, but returned home due to the pandemic; they could no longer receive services from their usual provider until a temporary measure was passed. Additionally, 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:

- Addresses increased demand to provide/receive audiology and speech-language pathology services.
- Authorizes both telehealth and in-person practice across state lines in ASLP-IC states.
- Is similar in form and function to occupational licensure compacts for nursing, psychology, medicine, physical therapy and emergency medical services.
- Increases public access to audiology and speech-language pathology services by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses;
- Enhances the states' ability to protect the public's health and safety;
- Encourages the cooperation of member states in regulating multistate audiology and speech-language pathology practice;
- Supports spouses of relocating active duty military personnel;

- Enhances the exchange of licensure, investigative and disciplinary information between member states;
- Allows a remote state to hold a provider of services with a Compact privilege in that state accountable to that state's practice standards; and
- 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,

Diana F. Bennett, CCC-SLP