

1/24/2021

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 works in Howard County schools and has been for almost 20 years. 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: authorize 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 which already exist, and allow for the use of telehealth technology to facilitate increased access to audiology and speech language pathology services which is in high need during the current crisis our country is facing. I have many students who while learning virtually, at times leave the state to visit family members. When they do, although they can continue to receive their special education services they cannot receive my services. Due to the fact that I only have a licence to practice in Maryland. This unfortunate barrier keeps my students from receiving all the services they are entitled to under their Individual Education Plan (IEP) as provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Passage of HB 288 would remove that barrier.

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,
Kristin Meadows M.S. CCC-SLP MD Licence #05370