

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 714 State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists - Appointment of Members

Position: SUPPORT

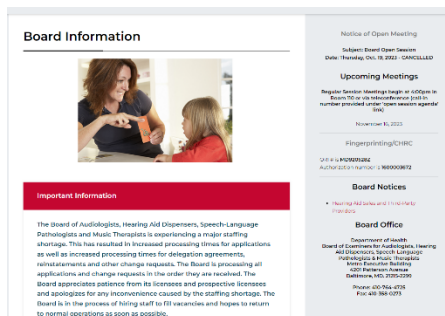
Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D. Oral Testimony

Madam Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Committee Members,

My name is Alicia Spoor and I am here in **strong** support of SB 714 and am pleased to be working with Senators Kramer and Hershey.

I was appointed the Maryland Academy of Audiology's (MAA) Legislative Chair in 2013 and have been working on state advocacy issues since that time. One of my roles is to attend the Board of Examiners monthly open meetings. In the past 10+ years, I have documented significant deficiencies with the Board, including, but not limited to:

- Revolving and major staffing shortages:



The screenshot shows two panels from a website. The left panel, titled 'Board Information', features a photo of a woman and a child and a red banner with 'Important Information'. The right panel, titled 'Notice of Open Meeting', contains details about a cancelled meeting and lists upcoming meetings for November 2023, including 'Fingerprinting/CRISC' and 'Board Notices'.

- Delays in website updates and content:



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AUDIOLOGY

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- Significant delays with Board Members attendance to obtain a quorum and conduct a meeting¹;
- Multiple Board members’ attendance at less than 60% during a calendar year; and
- Board staff members who are unable to locate Statute for proposed legislation

just to name a few.

Legislation was passed in 2021 that removed the MAA’s responsibility to nominate three licensed audiologists for each vacant Board seat. Therefore, the responsibility was granted exclusively to the Board to submit names to the Governor.

During the Board’s open meeting on February 15, 2024, the Board openly acknowledged that it has not been nominating audiologists for the vacant Board seat. [The Board meeting was recorded but is not made public. Committee Members can contact the Board to obtain a recording.] In 2023, the MAA submitted 3 names for the vacant audiology seat directly through the Governor’s portal. Multiple conversations were completed noting that the Governor’s appointment office had not received names from the Board for the audiology seat and was waiting. The Board did not submit any names, causing significant confusion and delay, including 3 missed Board meetings. This is unacceptable.

SB 714 would remedy this and ensure the confusion and delay does not happen again, by requiring the MAA, audiology’s dedicated state association, to submit names for the vacant audiology seat.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important piece of legislation. I ask for a favorable committee report on SB 714.

¹ <https://health.maryland.gov/boardsahs/Documents/mins1123.pdf>



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Alicia D.D. Spoor, Au.D.

Doctor of Audiology

Legislative Chair, Maryland Academy of Audiology