



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ www.mota-members.com

Committee:	Senate Finance Committee
Bill Number:	Senate Bill 239 – State Board of Occupational Therapy Practice – Sunset Extension
Hearing Date:	January 18, 2024
Position:	Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports with amendments Senate Bill 239 – State Board of Occupational Therapy Practice – Sunset Extension. This bill extends the termination date for the State Board of Occupational Therapy Practice by three years to July 1, 2028.

MOTA strongly supports extending the statutory authorization of the Board of Occupational Therapy Practice. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are essential providers in hospital, nursing home, school, outpatient, and behavioral health settings.

In working with our members, we have consistently heard positive feedback about the Board. The Board is well-managed and meets its statutory charge to ensure occupational therapy providers meet Maryland’s standards. The licensure and renewal process has been efficient, even during COVID. The Board has also been responsive to questions from licensees and the general public.

MOTA would like to request an amendment to extend the sunset date of the Board by 10 years, which had been the standard practice with prior sunset bills. In making the decision about this requested amendment, we reviewed the sunset history of the Board of Occupational Therapy Practice for the last 25 years. At that time, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) began the sunset process by conducting preliminary reviews. If DLS identified no major issues, the practice was to recommend waiving the full review requirement, which required extensive resources, and extend the sunset of a board or commission by 10 years. The Legislative Policy Committee would review DLS’ recommendations at its fall meeting, and make the final decision.

In our research of the legislative history, we found that the DLS conducted preliminary sunset reviews of the Board in 2001 and 2012:

2012: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/OPA/S/P/OccTherapy_2012.pdf

2001: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/OPA/S/P/OccTherapy_2001.pdf

With both of these preliminary reviews, DLS recommended waiving a full review and extending the sunset date of the Board by 10 years. In both cases, the Legislative Policy Committee adopted the DLS recommendation and the Board's sunset renewal legislation passed without issue.

Given that the Board has such a strong track record, we ask for consideration of modifying *SB 239* to extend the Board's authorization by statute by another 10 years:

Requested Amendment

On page 2 in line 3, strike "2028" and replace with "2035".

Thank you for your consideration. If you need any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.