



March 21st, 2024

Bill: SB 714/HB 1476 – State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists – Appointment of Members

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

The Maryland Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA) has represented nearly 4,000 licensed professionals with advanced degrees in speech-language and audiology since 1964. We write to offer proposed amendments to SB 714/HB 1476. As amended, the bill would require the Governor to appoint licensed audiologists to the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists from a list submitted by the Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA), rather than by the Board itself. Hearing Aid Dispensers and Music Therapists already submit a list of names. If this bill passes as amended, Speech-Language Pathologists will be the only professional group represented by the Board without statutory authority to submit a list of names.

1. We respectfully request an amendment to allow MSHA, as the only organization that represents Speech-Language Pathologists in Maryland, to submit names to the Governor:

(i) Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, the Governor shall appoint the speech-language pathologist members, with the advice of the Secretary, from a list submitted to the Secretary and the Governor by the Maryland Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

(ii) The number of names on the list shall be at least 3 times the number of vacancies.

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(iii) For each speech-language pathology vacancy, the Board shall notify all licensed speech-language pathologists in the State of the vacancy to solicit nominations to fill the vacancy.

As amended, the bill would allow only the Maryland Academy of Audiology to submit names of audiologists to the Board. As the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)-affiliated state association, MSHA represents the professions of audiology *and* speech-language pathology, including over 350 ASHA certified audiologists who work in the state. Both MSHA and MAA are deeply invested in the practice of audiology in Maryland.

2. We ask that MSHA be given an equal opportunity to submit names for appointment of audiologists to the Board:

(5) (i) Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, the Governor shall appoint the audiologist members, with the advice of the Secretary, from a lists submitted to the Secretary and the Governor by the [Board] MARYLAND ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY AND THE MARYLAND SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION.

Thank you for considering MSHA's proposed amendments to HB 1476.

Sincerely,



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