



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers & Speech-Language Pathologists
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
Phone: 410-764-4723

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 523 – State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists – Duties, Appointment of Members, and Requirement for Licensees – Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Pinsky:

The State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists (the “Board”) is submitting this letter of support with amendments for SB 523 - State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists – Duties, Appointment of Members, and Requirement for Licensees. This bill’s purpose serves to amend Health Occupations Article 1-801 to include the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists as one of the included health occupations. It also serves to provide transparency and consistency amongst licensees to practice under said profession under the same name as indicated on their license; to provide a license number on any written documentation; to change the onus of soliciting for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Board member appointments from local professional organizations to the Board itself; to change the onus of soliciting for the consumer of Board occupations services seat for a Board appointment from The Department of Disabilities, to any organization representing patients or family members of patients served by individuals licensed by the Board; to allow the Board and the Secretary to solicit for the consumer Board member appointment from the general public; to clarify statute language regarding requirements for licensure and the discretion of the Board to waive any of the qualifications required for a license to practice Audiology, Hearing Aid Dispensing, Speech-Language Pathology, or assisting in Speech-Language Pathology; and other clarifying changes.

Since the time of bill submission, the Board has learned of the potential magnitude of the fiscal impact of conducting a balloting process. The Board does not wish to incur these costs and would prefer to make the recommendation for Board seat appointments based upon the diversity of the applicants to include but not limited to: geography, race, ethnicity and sub-specialty within the profession.

The Board supports SB 523 with the following Board-approved amendments:

Page 1, line 13, after the word “certain,” strike “BALLOTING” and on page 1, line 16 after the word “certain,” strike “BALLOTING.”

Page 1, lines 26-29, after the word “documentation;”, strike the lines beginning with the word “repealing” through “website;”.

Under § 2-202, page 5, lines 7-11 should read: (III) FOR EACH LICENSED SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST VACANCY, THE BOARD SHALL NOTIFY ALL LICENSED SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS IN THE STATE OF THE VACANCY TO SOLICIT NOMINATIONS TO FILL THE VACANCY.

Under § 2-202, page 5, delete lines 12-15.

Under § 2-202, page 5, lines 22-25 should read: [(ii)] (III) For each audiologist vacancy, the [Maryland Academy of 23 Audiology and the Maryland Speech–Language and Hearing Association] BOARD shall[:]

[(1) Notify] NOTIFY all licensed audiologists in the State of the vacancy to solicit nominations to fill the vacancy[: and].

Under § 2-202, page 5, delete lines 26-28.

Under § 2-311(a), page 8, lines 29-30, strike the brackets.

Page 9, line 1, renumber (A)(1) to be (B)(1), delete (2), and renumber (3) to be (2).

Page 9, line 6 renumber (b) to be (C), line 8 renumber (c) to be (D).

The Board respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 523 with the requested amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of the Board’s position. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Board’s Executive Director, Dr. Candace G. Robinson, Au.D., at Candace.Robinson@maryland.gov or 443-915-7981.

Sincerely,



Candace G. Robinson, Au.D.
Board Executive Director