

Dr. Vic S. Gladstone
8625 Sassafras Court
Columbia, MD 21046

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Delegate Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
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. As a licensed audiologist in Maryland and professor emeritus at Towson University responsible for providing clinical services and educating audiologists and speech-language pathologists, this legislation is vital and progressive.

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 providing services for patients. Passage of HB 288 would:

- Addresses increased demand to provide/receive audiology and speech-language pathology services;
- Authorizes both telehealth and in-person practice across state lines in Audiology & Speech Language Pathology - Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) states;
- Is similar in form and function to occupational licensure compacts for nursing, psychology, medicine, physical therapy and emergency medical services;
- Increases public access to audiology and speech-language pathology services by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses;
- Enhances the states' ability to protect the public's health and safety;
- Encourages the cooperation of member states in regulating multi-state audiology and speech-language pathology practice;
- Supports spouses of relocating active duty military personnel;
- Enhances the exchange of licensure, investigative and disciplinary information between member states;
- Allows a remote state to hold a provider of services with a Compact privilege in that state accountable to that state's practice standards; and
- Allows for the use of telehealth technology to facilitate increased access to audiology and speech language pathology services.

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 clinicians who serve them. I hope that you will give HB 288 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Vic S. Gladstone

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