

HB0830: State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists - Physician Members - Repeal

Sponsor: Delegate Robbyn Lewis

Chair Shane E. Pendergrass
House Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **HB 830** - State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists - Physician Members - Repeal

Position: **SUPPORT**

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

February 24, 2022

Madam Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Committee Members:

My name is Alicia Spoor and I am an audiologist and small business owner in Howard County and the current Legislative Chair for the Maryland Academy of Audiology (MAA). MAA represents the more than 500 licensed audiologists in the State of Maryland. I am here in support of House Bill 830 and am pleased to be working with Delegate Robbyn Lewis to update the Maryland Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists membership.

When legislation was passed in 2003 and then vetoed, the voting state of the physicians changed; physicians cannot vote on any scope of practice issues related to audiology and/or speech-language pathology. Since that time, the physicians have made **no** attempt to obtain full voting privileges. The lack of ability for the physicians to fully participate at the Board of Examiner level implies the indifference mentality which is proven by their low attendance at Board meetings.

Additionally, the Board of Examiners submitted their own legislation this session, HB 155¹, SB 103². This legislation, as you likely remember from your unanimous favorable vote, defines who must be present to have a quorum for Board of Examiners meetings. One of each professional is required: an Audiologist, Hearing Aid Dispenser, Speech-Language Pathology, and Music Therapist. You passed the bill intentionally leaving physicians off the required quorum list. Stated another way, the Board of Examiners' legislation does not require the physicians to be present to hold a quorum and therefore conduct a meeting. The physicians themselves would have agreed to this, prior to the Board pre-filing the legislation. It begs the question: Do physicians need to be present at all?

¹ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0155>

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0103?ys=2022RS>

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Since 2003, not only is the actual attendance by ENTs sub-par and absent at critical emergency hearings, the ENT physicians make no substantive contributions or impart any educational information in a review of the Board of Examiner minutes just from 2016 to 2021. All they do to make procedural motions to adjourn, motions to adopt the agenda and the minutes. Is this the best use of ENT physician-surgeons time to simply do this? (See attached MAA Monthly Meeting Review, 2016-2021).

Finally, the most recent Board of Examiners meeting on February 17, 2022 was recorded, and I suggest you demand the visual and recorded copy. The Board of Examiners voted to oppose this legislation and one of the members suggested that there is a 'snake in the woodpile' when discussing this legislation. The conversation continued and when the question was asked about the intent of HB 830, the answer implied that legislators are 'out-of-touch' and 'stupid'. The erroneous observation of the Board of Examiners must be corrected by your support for this bill.

This legislation removing the ENTs from the Board of Examiners was passed in 2003, the objections in Governor Ehrlich's veto have been completely addressed, and this bill should be passed again. The apathy and dispirited concern from the physicians for the Board of Examiners' own legislation and other Boards with arguably more responsibility (via prescriptive medication) demonstrates the need for the physicians to be removed from this Board.

Thank you for your time consideration and to Delegate Lewis for sponsoring this legislation. I ask for a favorable committee report on HB 830.

**Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers,
Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists**

**Comments by Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Physicians, as noted in
the public Board minutes.**

None of the Board Meeting Minutes document that the ENT physicians provide any information other than motion, second, and when an unanimous vote is recorded.

2021:

- **January:**
 - Dr. Nguyen motioned open session.
 - Dr. Nguyen second agenda approval.
 - Dr. Nguyen motion to approve minutes.
- January Emergency Board Meeting #1: None.
- January Emergency Board Meeting #2: None.
- February: None.
- February Emergency Board Meeting #1: None.
- February Emergency Board Meeting #2: No attendance.
- March: None.
- March Emergency Board Meeting: None.
- April: None.
- May: None.
- June: None.
- **July:**
 - Dr. Nguyen second to adjourn.
- August: No meeting held.
- September: None.
- October: None.
- **November:**
 - Dr. Nguyen seconded a vote to approve license applications.
- December: No meeting held.



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2020:

- January: None.
- February:
 - Dr. Nieman motioned to accept Telehealth legislation.
- March: None.
- March Emergency Meeting:
 - Dr. Nguyen second agenda.
- April: None
- April Emergency Meeting:
 - Dr. Nguyen motion agenda.
- May: None.
- June: None.
- July: None.
- August: None.
- September: None.
- October:
 - Dr. Nguyen second license approvals.
- November: None.
- December: No meeting held.

2019:

- January: No attendance.
- February: No meeting held.
- March: No meeting held.
- April: None.
- May: None.
- June: None.
- July: None.
- August: No meeting held.
- September:
 - Dr. Nguyen second agenda.
- October: None.
- November: None.
- December: No meeting held.



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2018:

- January: None.
- February: No attendance.
- March: No attendance.
- April: No attendance.
- May: None.
- June: None.
- July: No meeting held.
- August: None.
- September: None.
- October: None.
- November: No meeting held.
- December: No meeting held.

2017:

- **January:**
 - Dr. Weinreich motioned to approve agenda.
- **February:**
 - Dr. Weinreich motioned minutes.
- March: None.
- April: None.
- May: None.
- June: None.
- July: No meeting held.
- **August:**
 - Dr. Weinreich second to adjourn.
- **September:**
 - Dr. Weinreich motioned minutes.
- October: None.
- November: None.
- December: No meeting held.

2016:

- January: None.
- February: Vacant.



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- March: No attendance.
- April: None.
- May: None.
- June: No attendance.
- July: No meeting held.
- August: None.
- September: No meeting held.
- **October:**
 - Dr. Weinreich motioned agenda.
- **November:**
 - Dr. Weinreich motioned agenda.
- December: No meeting held.

*None: no motions or seconds. Votes were noted to be unanimous.