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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**Testimony in Support of SB 88 - State Board of Examiners for Audiologists,
Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech–Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists –
Authority to Issue Limited Licenses to Practice Music Therapy**

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and fellow Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

SB 88 authorizes the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech–Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists to issue a limited license to practice music therapy. The purpose of this limited license is to allow qualified individuals to practice under supervision while completing the final examination requirement for full licensure.

This bill addresses a narrow but important gap in current law. While the Board already issues limited licenses for several other regulated professions under its jurisdiction, music therapists currently lack a comparable pathway. SB 88 brings music therapy into alignment with the Board’s existing licensure framework.

Background

Under current law, individuals seeking full licensure as music therapists must complete all educational and clinical training requirements and obtain board certification. However, applicants who have completed all requirements except the certification examination are not currently eligible to practice, even under supervision.

As a result, otherwise qualified individuals face delays in entering the workforce, and patients and care settings lose access to needed services during this interim period.

Existing Law

The State Board already has authority to issue limited licenses to other professionals it regulates, including audiologists and speech–language pathologists. These limited licenses allow supervised practice while individuals complete remaining licensure requirements and ensure that the Board maintains regulatory oversight during that period.

Music therapy is the only discipline under the Board’s jurisdiction that does not currently have access to a limited licensure pathway.

Solution

SB 88 authorizes the Board to issue a limited license to practice music therapy under clearly defined conditions.

Specifically, the bill:

- Allows an applicant who meets all licensure requirements except the certification examination to receive a limited license;
- Requires that limited licensees practice only under the supervision of a fully licensed music therapist;
- Limits the duration of a limited license to one year, with the option for a single one-year renewal; and
- Ensures that individuals who do not obtain full licensure within two years must wait a minimum of one year before reapplying.
- This approach promotes workforce entry while preserving patient safety and maintaining the Board's ability to enforce the Practice Act.

Fiscal Impact

Per the Fiscal and Policy Note, the Board can issue limited licenses using existing budgeted resources. License and renewal fees are not anticipated to meaningfully impact special fund revenues, and there is no anticipated impact on local governments or small businesses.

Closing

SB 88 is a measured and responsible update to Maryland's licensure framework. It improves consistency across the Board's regulated professions, supports workforce development, and ensures that appropriate supervision and regulatory oversight remain in place.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 88.