

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1198

As of March 18, 2005

Title: An act relating to speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Brief Description: Regarding speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Bailey and Cody.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/05, 89-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/17/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: The Board of Speech and Hearing licenses speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and hearing instrument fitters/dispensers, and acts as the disciplining authority for unprofessional conduct under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. In addition, some speech-language pathologists and audiologists are certified as educational staff associates through the State Board of Education. These educational staff associates are not required to be licensed with the Board of Speech and Hearing.

Speech-language pathology includes the treatment of speech and language disorders that impede oral competencies and the normal process of communication. Audiology relates to hearing disorders that impede the process of human communication, and includes the application of aural rehabilitation and the fitting and dispensing of hearing instruments.

Interim permits may be issued by the Board of Speech and Hearing to speech-language pathologists and audiologists who meet academic and practicum requirements for licensure but need to complete post-graduate professional experience and examination requirements. Interim permit holders must practice under the direct supervision of a licensed hearing instrument fitter/dispenser, licensed speech-language pathologist, or licensed audiologist. Direct supervision requires that the supervisor be physically present in the same room as the interim permit holder.

Summary of Bill: The direct supervision requirement for speech-language pathologists and audiologists who practice pursuant to an interim permit is removed. Those practicing under an interim permit must do so under supervision, but not necessarily direct supervision.

Speech-language pathologists and audiologists that are certified educational staff associates may not practice outside the school setting unless they have a license from the Board of Speech and Hearing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill provides technical clean-up for two provisions. The direct supervision requirement was a hold-over from when there was an apprenticeship program; because that program no longer exists, the direct supervision requirement is no longer required to those who hold interim permits. Because there is a loophole in the educational staff associate requirement, this bill is needed to ensure that those who are practicing outside of the educational setting are licensed.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Melissa Johnson, Washington Speech and Hearing Association.