

HB 288 -- SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

SPONSOR: Dohrman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 17 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill changes the laws regarding speech-language pathologists, speech-language pathology assistants, and audiologists. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Allows a speech-language pathology assistant to work under the direction of a licensed speech-language pathologist practicing for at least one year or a speech-language pathologist who is either employed by a federal agency or licensed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;

(2) Requires an applicant for registration with the Board of Registration for the Healing Arts within the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration as a speech-language pathology assistant to furnish evidence of his or her completion of bachelor's level course work and clinical requirements in the field of speech-language pathology as established by the board. Currently, an applicant must furnish evidence that he or she holds a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and has completed clinical practicum requirements equivalent to that required by a regional accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education or its equivalent;

(3) Repeals the requirement that a corporation engaged in the business of speech-language pathology or audiology who employs a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist must file a statement with the board specifying that the corporation submits itself to the rules and regulations of the board;

(4) Specifies that the licensing requirements do not apply to a person who holds a current valid certificate as a speech-language pathologist issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education prior to January 1, 2016, who is an employee of a public school;

(5) Repeals the provisions requiring an applicant for licensure as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist to present written evidence of completion of a clinical fellowship;

(6) Specifies that following an administrative hearing proceeding

and a finding that grounds for disciplinary action have been met, the board may also restrict or limit the person's ability to practice for an indefinite period of time;

(7) Requires every speech-language pathology assistant to provide and maintain at all times the employment information as the board deems necessary;

(8) Allows a person who has served as a member of the Advisory Commission for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists for two consecutive terms to be reappointed until a lapse of at least two years has occurred following the completion of the person's two consecutive terms; and

(9) Repeals the provisions allowing a person to hold a provisional license to practice speech-language pathology or audiology.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that currently there are shortages of speech language pathologists throughout the state, especially in rural areas. The bill makes the statute less restrictive which allows speech language pathologist assistants to fill the shortage. The bill makes needed changes to update the provisions regarding credentialing.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dohrman; Diane Golden, Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education/Missouri Speech-Lang-Hearing Association; and Jane Webb.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.