



March 13, 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Senate Education, Energy and
the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
House Ways and Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 791/HB 883

Dear Senator Feldman and Delegate Atterbeary:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support SB 791/HB 883, which would allow school-based audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to be eligible for a salary supplement through an alternative high-quality educator credential.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 228,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. SLPs identify, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders. These services help children acquire language and enable people to recover essential skills to communicate about their health and safety, to swallow adequate nutrition safely, and to have sufficient attention, memory, and organizational skills to function in their environment. Over 4,200 ASHA members reside in Maryland and 57% of those members work in education facilities.¹

Providing a salary supplement helps to ensure enhanced recruitment and retention of highly qualified professionals who serve those most in need in Maryland schools. Audiologists and SLPs working in school settings often face high caseloads and high volumes of paperwork while working with a range of students that may be facing complex communication disorders or may be considered medically fragile.² Additionally, these practitioners may have to take on duties outside of their normal scope due to personnel shortages in schools.³ As a result, schools may have challenges with recruitment and retention because of the daily challenges these professionals face in this workplace setting.

Should the Committees choose to add profession specific certifications to clarify who the salary supplement is available to, we would ask that the following language be inserted to recognize the certification available for audiologists and SLP.

In SB 791 / HB 883, we ask for an amendment on Page 3 line, 8, after the semicolon, insert:
(II) A CERTIFICATE OF CLINICAL COMPETENCE (CCC) AWARDED BY THE
AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION (ASHA);”

Thank you for considering ASHA's position to support to SB 791/HB 883. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director, state legislative and regulatory affairs, at sadams@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
2023 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Maryland* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/maryland-state-flyer.pdf>.

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *2022 School Survey: SLP Caseload and Workload Characteristics*. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-caseload.pdf>.

³ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *2022 School Survey: SLP Workforce and Work Conditions*. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-workforce.pdf>.