

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 613
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The educational standards for licensure as an audiologist in Texas are no longer adequate compared to other states. For example, currently, there are no master's level audiology programs graduating students, as all nationally accredited programs require doctoral level programs. S.B. 613 would amend the licensing act for audiologists by changing the educational standards for licensure from a master's degree in communicative disorders to a doctoral degree in audiology (AuD) if the program is accredited by a national accrediting organization approved by the State Board of Examiners of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiology (board). This change would bring Texas in line with industry standards.

In addition, current Texas law references only one nationally recognized accrediting body, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. S.B. 613 gives the board the authority to approve additional national accrediting bodies.

Finally, Texas has benefited from reciprocity agreements with other states in the licensing of numerous health professions. However, the board is not currently authorized to recognize reciprocity agreements with other states for the licensing of audiologists. S.B. 613 would allow the board to waive any prerequisite for licensure for an applicant licensed in another state that has licensing requirements substantially equivalent to those of this state, and which has a reciprocity agreement with Texas. These reciprocity agreements would be subject to final approval by the Office of the Governor.

As proposed, S.B. 613 amends current law relating to educational requirements for licensing as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist and to reciprocity for audiologists licensed in other states.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 401.304(a), Occupations Code, as follows:

(a) Requires an applicant, to be eligible for licensing as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist, to adhere to certain provisions, including if the application is for a license in speech-language pathology, possess at least a master's degree with a major in at least one of the areas of communicative sciences or disorders from a program accredited by a national accrediting organization approved by the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (board), rather than accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, in an accredited or approved college or university; or audiology, possess at least a doctoral degree in audiology from a program accredited by a national accrediting organization approved by the board in an accredited or approved college or university.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter G, Chapter 401, Occupations Code, by adding Section 401.3081, as follows:

Sec. 401.3081. AUDIOLOGIST LICENSED IN ANOTHER JURISDICTION. (a) Authorizes the board to waive any prerequisite to obtaining a license for an applicant for licensing as an audiologist after reviewing the applicant's credentials and determining that the applicant holds a license issued by another jurisdiction that has licensing requirements substantially equivalent to those of this state.

(b) Authorizes the board to waive any prerequisite to obtaining a license for an applicant for licensing as an audiologist who holds a license issued by another jurisdiction with which this state has a reciprocity agreement. Authorizes the board to make an agreement, subject to the approval of the governor, with another state to allow for licensing by reciprocity.

SECTION 3. Makes application of Section 401.304, Occupations Code, as amended by this Act, prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2011.