



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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Honorable Alan Powell
Chairman, House Regulated Industries Committee
613-B Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill 34 (LC 41 2650)

Dear Chairman Powell:

The bill would have Georgia join an interstate compact known as the “Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact” (ASLP-IC). Under the bill, the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology may issue audiologists and speech-language pathologists with a license with a privilege to practice traditional or telehealth services in other member states. Applicants must pay for and pass a national criminal background check. The bill would allow practitioners licensed in other states to seek a compact privilege license in Georgia. The legislation would take effect when ten states have passed this enhanced compact model legislation.

Implementation of the bill is estimated to result in both one-time costs to update an information system and annual costs for additional staffing and ASLP-IC compact membership. The bill will likely result in revenue that would offset some portion of these costs, but the revenue is dependent on the number of licensees from other states that seek compact privileges in Georgia, as well as the number of Georgia audiologists and speech-language pathologists that obtain a license with privileges to practice in other states (versus a single state license to practice only in Georgia).

Additional Costs

- *Information System* – The Secretary of State (SOS) will update its information system to add additional license types. The SOS also indicated that the licensing system will require a new interface to communicate with the Compact Commission’s data system. The SOS estimates that the system update and interface creation will cost approximately \$60,000.

- *Additional Staff* – The SOS anticipates that this bill would result in new applications from audiologists and speech-language pathologists seeking compact privilege licenses in Georgia. The bill would also increase the amount of background checks that must be processed, the number of license investigations conducted, and would require reporting Georgia licensee information to the Compact Commission’s data system. The SOS believes the additional workload would require one additional licensure analyst at an annual cost of \$49,000.
- *Compact Membership* – While the ASLP-IC and its governing commission are not yet operational and have not determined the exact compact membership fee for states, the Director of the National Center for Interstate Compacts indicated that the fee charged to member states is unlikely to exceed the \$6,000 annual compact membership fee assessed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.
- *National Background Checks* – The SOS will be required to conduct national background checks on license applicants as a result of the bill. The background checks must include the submission of applicant fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation through the Georgia Crime Information Center. The applicant is responsible for all fees associated with the performance of the background check; therefore, there are no additional state funds required as a result of the bill.

Additional Revenues

- *License Fee* – The SOS indicated that a \$50 application fee would be assessed for audiologists and speech-language pathologists that are licensed in other states but wish to practice in Georgia. While unable to provide an exact number, the SOS expects a substantial increase in monthly license applications due to out-of-state applicants applying for a compact privilege license. It is unclear if SOS will charge an additional fee for Georgia licensees that desire a license that allows a privilege to practice in other states. It is assumed that those Georgia licensees will be assessed a fee by the member state in which they are seeking to practice.

Sincerely,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Kelly Farr, Director
Office of Planning and Budget