



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number:	S. 0277	Amended by the Senate on March 5, 2019
Author:	Senn	
Subject:	Speech-Language Pathologists Assistants Exemptions	
Requestor:	House Medical, Military, Public, and Municipal Affairs	
RFA Analyst(s):	A. Martin, Mitchell, and Wren	
Impact Date:	March 27, 2019	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill will have no expenditure impact on the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR) because it does not materially alter the oversight or regulatory activities of the agency.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) indicates that the bill will not materially alter the responsibilities or oversight of the department. In addition, Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) does not expect any reduction in Medicaid provider billings as the number of speech-language pathologists or audiologists is not expected to change from requirements of the bill.

This bill will increase Other Funds revenue for LLR because it will increase the number of licenses issued after September 1, 2020. While not expected to be significant, LLR is unable to determine the number of additional licenses issued. Therefore, the revenue impact to Other Funds is undetermined.

RFA does not expect any reduction in Medicaid provider billings by local school districts as the number of speech-language pathologists or audiologists is not expected to change as the bill provides two exemptions to the licensure requirements of this bill specifically for speech-language professionals and audiologists employed by local school districts.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Amended by the Senate on March 5, 2019

State Expenditure

This bill requires speech-language pathology assistants and supervising pathologists to adhere to the guidelines of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. A Speech-language pathology assistant only may practice under the direct supervision of a speech-language pathologist. In addition, this bill exempts educators certified by the State Board of Education from the licensure requirements of Chapter 67, Title 40. Also exempted from the licensure requirements of this Chapter are speech-language pathologists or audiologists employed by a state or federal agency or political subdivision of the State before September 1, 2020.

Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. This bill requires speech-language pathologists and audiologists employed by a state or federal agency or political subdivision of the State after September 1, 2020, to be licensed by LLR's Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Currently, such employees are exempt from licensure requirements. As a result, this bill will increase the number of licenses issued by LLR beginning

in FY 2020-21. This bill will not require licensure for educators certified by the Board of Education, including educators certified as speech-language therapists.

LLR currently licenses 283 audiologists, 2,776 speech-language pathologists, and a total of 232 speech-language pathology assistants and interns. Because the bill will not affect certified educators or speech-language pathologists or audiologists employed by a state or federal agency, or a political subdivision of the State, prior to September 1, 2020, LLR does not anticipate a significant increase in the number of licenses issued in future years. Therefore, this bill will have no expenditure impact on LLR.

Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS indicates that the bill will not materially alter the responsibilities or oversight of the department.

However, any reduction in the amount of services provided by these professionals to Medicaid recipients from the provisions of this bill could result in a decrease in Medicaid provider payments. This situation would reduce General Fund and Federal Fund expenditures in proportion to the reduction in Medicaid claims filed. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs does not anticipate that situation will occur. This bill does not affect private sector speech-language pathologists, assistants, interns, and audiologists and audiologist interns since they are currently licensed. Certified educators, including speech-language therapists are exempt from the proposed licensure requirements. Speech-language pathologists or audiologists employed by a state or federal agency or a political subdivision will not require licensure unless they are hired after September 1, 2020. When these agencies and governments are required to replace these grandfathered speech-language pathologists or audiologists, we expect that the replacement professionals will have attained the educational and experience requirements necessary for licensure. Therefore, we do not expect any reduction in the number of speech-language pathologists or audiologists or any reduction in Medicaid provider billings.

State Revenue

This bill requires speech-language pathologists and audiologists employed by a state or federal agency or political subdivision of the State after September 1, 2020, to be licensed by LLR's Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Currently, such employees are exempt from licensure requirements. This bill will not affect state or federal speech-language pathologists employed prior to this date, as they will remain exempt from licensure requirements. In addition, this bill exempts certified educators, including speech-language therapists, employed by a school district from the licensure requirements. As a result of this bill, LLR will experience some increase in the number of licenses issued in future years. LLR does not anticipate this increase to be significant. However, the agency is unable to determine the additional number of licensure requests that will be generated by this bill. Therefore, the increase to Other Funds revenue from the additional license fees is undetermined.

Local Expenditure

N/A

Local Revenue

This bill requires speech-language pathologists and audiologists hired by a political subdivision of the State after September 1, 2020, to obtain a license. Currently, these employees are exempt from licensure requirements. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists currently employed

are exempted from the licensure requirements of this bill. Additionally, speech-language therapists employed by local school districts with a teaching certificate are also exempted from the licensure requirements of the bill regardless of their hire date.

The State Department of Education (SDE) indicates that speech-language professionals employed by local school districts bill Medicaid for services performed in a school setting. The services may be provided by speech-language pathology assistants, interns, or therapists, but must be supervised by a speech-language pathologist. SDE reports there are approximately 900 certified teachers employed by school districts that provide these services to the students.

While speech-language pathologists and pathology therapists hired after September 1, 2020, will be required to obtain a license, we expect that when the school districts are required to replace these grandfathered speech-language pathologists or audiologists in future years the replacement professionals will have attained the educational and experience requirements necessary for licensure. Therefore, we do not expect any reduction in the number of speech-language pathologists or audiologists utilized by school districts or any reduction in Medicaid provider billings and reimbursements to local school districts.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director