



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

February 1, 2023

Delegate Barry Knight
Chair
House Appropriations
Virginia General Assembly
Pocahontas Building
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Delegate C. Matthew Fariss
Chair
House Appropriations, Health and Human
Services Subcommittee
Virginia General Assembly
Pocahontas Building
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: HB 2033

Dear Delegates Knight and Fariss,

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support HB 2033, which adopts the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC).

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 223,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 4,800 ASHA members reside in Virginia.¹

ASHA members often have difficulty obtaining multiple state licenses to practice due to administrative burdens. These burdens hinder their ability to provide quality services and restrict consumer access in underserved and rural communities. I am pleased to support HB 2033, which will address these issues by:

- Increasing access to care for clients, patients, and/or students; and
- facilitating continuity of care when clients, patients, and/or students relocate or travel to another state, specifically with members of the military and their spouses.

ASHA recognizes there are questions regarding the fiscal note and would assert that this Compact is no different than any other compact that Virginia has joined, including nursing, physical therapy, EMS, psychology and occupational therapy. The Compact Commission will have the ability to levy and collect an annual assessment from each member state to cover the cost of operations. The amount will be formulated by the Commission and will be binding upon all member states. At the present time, the amount, if any, that will be imposed upon each state's budget is unknown. If Virginia passes this legislation, they will be among the group of delegates that make that determination. Currently, the Nursing Compact and the Psychology Compact are the only compacts that levy an annual assessment. The Nursing Compact assesses \$6,000 and the Psychology Compact assesses states on a sliding scale. The ASLP-IC Commission views these numbers as guardrails for what this Commission may implement. Virginia is also a member of a number of national compacts that assess the state an annual fee.

The ASLP-IC member states have indicated that they will seek grants from the Health Resources & Services Administration, the Department of Defense, and other relevant funders to

help avoid a state assessment. Additionally, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, and the American Academy of Audiology have committed to financial support. The Compact also allows states to charge a fee for the privilege to practice and its renewal to offset and any costs. These numbers don't include the fiscal benefit that can be realized by the Commonwealth for the recruitment and retention of qualified providers.

Passage of this bill would allow Virginia to enjoy the same benefits of the 23 other ASLP-IC member states, including the neighboring states of Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. The United States Department of Defense State Liaison Office joins ASHA in supporting HB 2033.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Susan Adams, ASHA's director of 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). *Virginia* [Quick Facts]. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/advocacy/state-fliers/virginia-state-flyer.pdf>.