

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 613
By: Rodriguez
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties assert that the educational standards for licensure as an audiologist in Texas, which currently require an applicant to possess a certain master's degree, are no longer adequate when compared to the requirements of other states, as most nationally accredited audiology programs are doctoral level programs. These interested parties further assert that the requirement that a program be accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association should be updated, as there are other nationally recognized accrediting bodies currently in existence. S.B. 613 seeks to bring Texas law in line with industry standards by updating provisions of law relating to the education requirements for licensing as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 613 amends the Occupations Code to require an applicant for licensing as an audiologist to possess at least a doctoral degree in audiology or a related hearing science from a program accredited by a national accrediting organization that is approved by the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and recognized by the United States secretary of education under the Higher Education Act of 1965 in an accredited or approved college or university.

S.B. 613 specifies that the master's degree required of an applicant for licensing as a speech-language pathologist must be from a program accredited by a national accrediting organization approved by the board and recognized by the United States secretary of education under the Higher Education Act of 1965, rather than from a program accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, in an accredited or approved college or university.

S.B. 613 authorizes a person who holds a license as an audiologist issued before the effective date of the bill to continue to renew that license without complying with degree requirements established by the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.