



**Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Committee Statement
LB 479**

Hearing Date: February 8, 2007
Committee On: Health and Human Services

Introducer(s): (Johnson)
Title: Change provisions relating to audiologists and speech-language pathologists

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

- Advanced to General File
 - X Advanced to General File with Amendments
 - Indefinitely Postponed
-

Vote Results:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| 6 | Yes | Senator(s): Johnson, Erdman, Hansen, Howard, Gay, Pankonin |
| | No | |
| 1 | Present, not voting | Senator Stuthman |
| | Absent | |
-

Proponents:

Senator Joel Johnson
Sue Rowland
Ryan McCreery

John Bernthal

Representing:

Introducer
Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association
American Speech Language Hearing Association
and Nebraska Speech Language Hearing
Association
University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Nebraska
Speech Language Hearing Association

Opponents:

Donna Bass Moss
Stephen Bush
Amy Prenda
Dr. Joy Dunnigan

Representing:

Hastings Public School
Nebraska Hearing Society
Nebraska Hearing Society
Nebraska Association of Special Education
Supervisors and Beatrice Public Schools

Neutral:

Virgil Horne
Korby M. Gilbertson

Representing:

Lincoln Public Schools
Boys Town National Research Hospital

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

LB 479 makes changes to statutes relating to audiology and speech-language pathology. The bill was introduced to implement provisions of a “407” review under the Nebraska Regulation of Health Professions Act (LB 407, 1985; Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 71-6201 to 71-6229).

The bill updates and revises the definition of the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology. The bill changes the term “communication assistant” to “audiology and speech-language pathology assistant,” and changes the statutory qualifications and duties for such assistants. The bill provides that an audiologist or speech-language pathologist may only supervise two such assistants at one time.

The bill requires a masters or doctoral degree for licensure as an audiologist. The bill would exempt audiologists who engage in the sale of hearing aids from statutes relating to hearing aide dispensers and fitters. The bill makes other technical and harmonizing changes and outright repeals sections 71-1,186.01, 71-1,190.01, and 71-1,192.

The bill includes sections 71-1,188; 71-1,189; 71-1,191, 71-1,193; and 71-1,194; but makes no changes to those sections (LB 479 sections 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8).

Explanation of amendments, if any:

The committee amendment (AM 783) strikes sections 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 18 (exemption from hearing aide dispenser statutes), and 20 (original repealer) and makes technical changes. The amendment adds new sections to provide a reduced fee for licensed audiologists who also obtain a hearing aide dispensing license and for the issuance of hearing aide dispensing licenses to audiologists without examination. The amendment clarifies that the practice of audiology or speech-language pathology does not include the practice of medical diagnosis, medical treatment, or surgery. The amendment authorizes the “utilization of a speech aide or other personnel employed by a public school, educational service unit, or other private or public educational institution working under the direct supervision of a credentialed speech-language pathologist.”

Senator Joel Johnson, Chairperson