

HB 542 -- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LICENSURE

SPONSOR: Shields

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 14 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill adopts the "Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact". The Compact allows an occupational therapist who meets the eligibility requirements to receive an expedited license.

To participate in the Compact, a member state must license both occupational therapists and occupational therapist assistances, participate in a data system, have a mechanism in place regarding complaints, consider criminal history records for applicants, utilize only recognized national examination as a requirement for licensure, and have continuing education requirements.

In order to utilize the provisions of the Compact to be licensed, an applicant must have no encumbrance on his or her license.

A person with an occupational therapist license from a state that has entered in to the Compact can practice in another state that has also entered in to the Compact, as long as the occupational therapist complies with any laws in the second state.

The Compact outlines how to update a home state designation and how adverse actions can be taken against a licensee.

The Compact outlines the establishment of an Occupational Therapy Compact Commission for the purpose of enforcing the Compact.

The Compact outlines the establishment of a coordinated database and reporting system containing licensure, adverse action, and investigative information on all licensed individuals in all member states.

The Compact will come in to effect once 10 states have entered into the Compact.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill reduces barriers by eliminating the need for occupational therapists to get a license in every state they practice in. However, the bill still protects the current system of state licensure. Under this compact, occupational therapists will still have to abide by the licensure laws in the state in which they are practicing. Supporters say that this compact is similar to the nurse licensure compact that

was passed several years ago. Supporters point out that COVID-19 has shown everyone how important it is that our health care practitioners are able to work across state lines and this bill would make that easier.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Shields; Dr. Michelle Jackson, Missouri Occupational Therapy Association; Missouri Hospital Association; American Physical Therapy Association of Missouri; Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital; Missouri Occupational Therapy Association; United WE; and William E. Janes.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.