

SB2258

Measure Title: RELATING TO LICENSING.

Report Title: Licensing; Audiologists; Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters

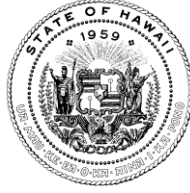
Description: Clarifies that the licensing requirements for hearing aid dealers and fitters shall not apply to audiologists licensed pursuant to chapter 468E, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Companion: [HB1948](#)

Package: None

Current Referral: CPH

Introducer(s): KEITH-AGARAN, Dela Cruz



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR
DOUGLAS S. CHIN
LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. Box 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: 586-2850
Fax Number: 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR

JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**PRESENTATION OF THE
PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING DIVISION**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2018

Wednesday, February 14, 2018
9:00 a.m.

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 2258, RELATING TO LICENSING.

TO THE HONORABLE ROSALYN BAKER, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE:

My name is Christine Rutkowski, and I am the Executive Officer for the Hearing Aid Dealer and Fitter Program, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (“Department”). The Department appreciates the opportunity to testify on S.B. 2258, which is a companion to H.B. 1948. The Department provides the following comments.

This measure exempts audiologists licensed pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) chapter 468E from the requirements of HRS chapter 451A.

Pursuant to HRS chapter 451A, applicants for a hearing aid dealer and fitter license shall be a high school graduate and successfully pass the International Licensing Examination for Hearing Healthcare Professionals.

The Department understands that audiologists complete a rigorous academic study of the science of hearing, balance, and related disorders including supervised clinical practice that culminates in the Au.D. degree. At the time of graduation, he/she will have completed at least eight (8) years of post-high school education. In addition, audiologists are required to take and successfully pass a licensure examination. A review of the audiology licensure exam indicates that the items test for minimal competency at least equal to that of the hearing aid dealer and fitter licensure examination. Thus, the Department believes that not requiring audiologists to hold the additional license of a hearing aid dealer and fitter will not result in consumer harm.

The Department suggests that in addition to the proposed amendments, a concomitant amendment be made to HRS chapter 468E to provide sufficient public notice that audiologists are not required to also comply with the requirements of HRS chapter 451A.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on S.B. 2258.

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2018

Wednesday, February 14, 2018
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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 2258, RELATING TO LICENSING.

TO THE HONORABLE ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is June Uyehara-Isono, and I am the Chairperson of the Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology ("Board"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.B. 2258, which is a companion to H.B. 1948. The Board is in strong support of this bill.

This measure clarifies that the licensing requirements for hearing aid dealers and fitters shall not apply to audiologists licensed pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") chapter 468E.

The Board supports S.B. 2258 because audiologists are already required to complete a rigorous academic study and clinical training that exceeds the education and training of hearing aid dealers and fitters. In addition, audiologists are required to pass a licensure examination which tests items that are equivalent or higher than the test items of the hearing aid dealers and fitters licensure examination.

Should the Committee also wish to clarify in HRS chapter 468E, Speech Pathologists and Audiologists, that audiologists are able to perform acts pursuant to HRS chapter 451A, the Board would support such an amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.B. 2258.

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Submitted on: 2/12/2018 11:40:30 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/14/2018 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lindsey Francis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2258 that states that licensed audiologists do not need a hearing aid dispenser license to fit hearing aids in the state of Hawaii. The education necessary to become a licensed audiologist far surpasses the requirements of a hearing aid dealer alone. As doctors of audiology, we have obtained the highest education in the field of clinical hearing care. A large portion of our 8 years of university education and training is centered around the treatment of hearing loss through hearing aid selection, fitting, and maintenance. We are also in constant communication with hearing aid companies and the most up-to-date research to ensure that we are knowledgeable not only on the most current hearing aids on the market, but the best ways to fit and set those hearing aids for our patients. This makes the requirement for audiologists to maintain a hearing aid dealer license repetitive, unnecessary, and even demeaning to our profession. Those who maintain their licensure as doctors of audiology should not be required to hold a hearing aid dealer license, as the education needed to hold an audiology license surpasses the education needed to hold a dealer license.

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Submitted on: 2/12/2018 12:06:13 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/14/2018 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eliza Cioffi	Island Audiology	Support	No

Comments:

I have been focused on and studying the field of audiology for almost 8 years now. I have studied and paid a significant amount of money for my education. I am capable and knowledgeable in this field. Taking a hearing aid dispensing licence is not necessary for audiologists, as they experience clinical rotations for all 4 years of their graduate program. This includes the dispensing of hearing aids and hearing evaluations. Graduate students are also required to take a praxis exam before receiving their Doctor of Audiology degree. They are much more experienced in the field than a hearing aid dispenser.