**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO TEMPORARILY EXEMPT APPLICANTS FOR LICENSURE AS A SPEECH‑LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST ASSISTANT FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF HAVING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE FROM A REGIONALLY ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOUND IN SECTION 49‑67‑220 OF THE 1976 CODE IF THE APPLICANT HOLDS A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN SPEECH‑LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY FROM A NATIONALLY ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS JOINT RESOLUTION LIBERALLY MUST BE CONSTRUED TO EFFECTUATE THE PURPOSES OF THIS JOINT RESOLUTION AND MUST BE APPLIED RETROACTIVELY; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPIRATION OF THIS JOINT RESOLUTION ON JULY 1, 2019.

Whereas, the General Assembly applauds the good faith efforts of people who try to better themselves by advancing their education, and encourages the pursuit of higher education as a means to achieving individual economic security and improving the economy of this State; and

Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes that in recent years some students embarked on a path to becoming speech‑language pathologist assistants in reliance on certain licensure requirements that subsequently were changed in a way that rendered their education meaningless for the purposes of seeking licensure; and

Whereas, prior to the enactment of Act 167 of 2014, applicants for licensure as speech‑language pathologist assistants were required to have earned a bachelor’s degree in speech‑language pathology without regard to the accreditation, if any, of the school that granted the degree. Following the enactment of Act 167 of 2014, applicants were required to have earned a bachelor’s degree in speech‑language pathology from a regionally accredited institution; and

Whereas, the General Assembly finds that this criteria change has had a profoundly negative impact on students enrolled in baccalaureate speech‑language pathology programs that are nationally accredited but not regionally accredited, and that it is necessary and proper to mitigate this negative impact by temporarily adjusting these requirements to fit the circumstances of these students and allow them a reasonable amount of time to complete the path to licensure that they embarked upon in good faith. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. An applicant for licensure as a speech‑language pathologist assistant who earned a bachelor’s degree in speech‑language pathology from a nationally accredited institution of higher education is exempt from the requirement of having a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education found in Section 49‑67‑220(F) of the 1976 Code, which was enacted by Act 167 of 2014, on May 16, 2014.

SECTION 2. The provisions of this joint resolution apply retroactively.

SECTION 3. The provisions of this joint resolution must be liberally construed to effectuate the purposes of this joint resolution.

SECTION 4. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor and expires on July 1, 2019.

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