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Governor Ron DeSantis Signs “The Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act” to Remove Unnecessary Barriers to Employment

Regulatory reforms will bring significant cost and time savings for aspiring professionals in Florida

Tallahassee, Fla. –Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed “The Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act” (HB 1193) which eliminates barriers of entry to certain professions licensed by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DPBR) by adding endorsement and reciprocity provisions, removing supplemental business licenses and corresponding license fees, reducing licensure education requirements, and eliminating other licensure and registration requirements.

“For two years, we’ve pushed for regulatory reforms in Florida’s occupational licensing system to remove unnecessary barriers for individuals pursuing their professional aspirations,” **said Governor DeSantis**. “Today, with legislative and public support, we’re delivering on those reforms with a comprehensive and meaningful bill that will save thousands of Floridians both time and money for years to come.”

DBPR Secretary Halsey Beshears said, “Governor DeSantis has been on the frontline of regulatory reform from day one, and with legislative action this year on HB 1193, Florida is now taking bold steps to reduce the regulatory burdens facing hardworking Floridians. The Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act is a major milestone in bringing common sense to occupational licensing standards, and I am confident it will be the foundation of new opportunities for many Floridians who are considering their own career paths.”

Senator Ben Albritton said, “All of the congratulations for streamlining Florida business regulations should go to Governor DeSantis. This is even more evidence that he cares about Floridians in a huge way. His leadership in this area is unparalleled!”

Representative Blaise Ingoglia said, “Today, Governor DeSantis signed into law the Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act— a piece of legislation stripping away unnecessary and onerous regulation, while keeping Floridians safe. As the largest occupational license deregulation bill in our state’s history, this law cuts bureaucratic red tape, eliminate excessive licensing laws and paves the way for future entrepreneurs. Thank you Governor DeSantis and Senator Albritton for your steadfast leadership on this important issue,”

The impacts of “The Occupational Freedom and Opportunity Act” include the following:

ENHANCING ENDORSEMENT & RECIPROCITY OPTIONS

- Requires the Department to enter into reciprocal licensing agreements with other states for several professions and get Floridians to work.
- Requires the Department to post on its website the existence of reciprocal license agreements or which jurisdictions have substantially similar licenses with license requirements and examination.
- Endorses all current and active out-of-state barber and cosmetologists licenses in Florida.
- Adds endorsement of building administrators, inspectors, and plans examiners, or the equivalent certification of another state or territory of the U.S.
- Adds a category of home inspector licensure by endorsement for applicants who maintain an insurance policy as required by this state and have held a license for at least 10 years in another state or territory.
- Removes examination requirements for landscape architects applying for endorsement, requiring only that they hold a license by another state or U.S. territory.
- Provides licensure by endorsement for electrical and alarm system contractors who have been licensed in another state for at least 10 years.
- Allows licensure of veterinarians by endorsement if they successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other exam that is equivalent to or more stringent than the examination required by the board.

REMOVING DUPLICATIVE BUSINESS LICENCES AND LICENSE FEES

- Eliminates separate business licenses for architects, geologists, and landscape architects who already hold an individual license in order to remove unnecessary barriers to entry.
- Allows yacht and ship brokers to maintain one license tied to their principal place of

business without requiring additional licenses for each branch office.

REDUCING LICENSURE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Reduces pre-licensure and continuing education hours in order to alleviate the cost barrier to certain professions.
- Removes the continuing professional education requirement for applicants applying for licensure by endorsement as a certified public accountant.
- Reduces the number of training hours required to be eligible for barber licensure from 1200 to 900 and specifies that the 900 training hours must be in sanitation, safety, and laws and rules. Reduces program certification requirements from 1,000 to 600 hours.
- Reduces amount of hours needed for licensure for specialists. Nail specialists reduced from 240-180 hours, facial specialists reduced from 260-220 hours, full specialists reduced from 500-400 hours.
- Lowers the continuing education requirement for cosmetologists from 16 hours to 10.
- Reduces the required continuing education hours for renewal of an alarm system contractor license from 14 hours to 7 hours every two years, and 14-11 hours for electrical contractors.

ELIMINATING OTHER LICENSURE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- Removes all provisions relating to the licensure of interior designers, although it allows for certification on an optional basis.
- Eliminates the registration and regulation of labor organizations by the Department.
- Removes registration requirements and licensure requirements for hair braiding, hair wrapping, and body wrapping by the Department.
- Eliminates the licensure requirement for timekeepers and announcers under the jurisdiction of the Florida State Boxing Commission.

REFORMING REQUIREMENTS IN OTHER REGULATED PROFESSIONS

- Re-defines “one and two family dwelling inspector” as “residential inspector.”
- Clarifies the limited types of veterinary medical services that are already permitted by rule, which include microchipping, vaccinations, immunizations and parasitic control.
- Includes completion of the (PAVE) Program for graduates of foreign schools of veterinary medicine that are not accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association to qualify for licensure as a veterinarian.
- Allows cosmetologists or specialists performing services in connection with a special event to no longer be required to be employed by a licensed salon or be required to make an appointment for a special event through a licensed salon. Also properly licensed individuals may offer hair shampooing, hair cutting, hair arranging, nail polish removal, nail filing, nail buffing, and nail cleansing services outside of a licensed salon.

- Raises the dollar amounts of the construction licensing exemption for handyman jobs to \$2,500.
- Reduces the number of members on the Florida Building Commission from 27 to 19 members.

CREATING COST SAVINGS FOR FLORIDIANS AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA

- Reduces expenditures to applicants and license holders by approximately \$1,466,318 over the next two fiscal years.
- Reduces expenditures to the state by approximately \$58,680 over the next two fiscal years.

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