



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



BILL

ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 4793 (Substitute H-1 as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Barb Byrum
House Committee: Regulatory Reform
Senate Committee: Economic Development and Regulatory Reform

Date Completed: 8-12-09

RATIONALE

Under the Occupational Code, in order to take the exam for licensure as an architect in Michigan, an applicant must have at least eight years of professional experience, including six years of education, and provide certain references to the board of architects. Consequently, architectural students might not be examined until well after they graduate with a degree in architecture. Reportedly, most other states have similar criteria for licensure as an architect, but allow prospective architects to take the exam soon after earning a degree. Some people believe that the experience and reference requirements that currently apply to eligibility to take the exam should apply instead to gaining licensure as an architect, which would allow recent graduates to be tested soon after obtaining a degree and then work on accumulating the mandatory experience for licensure.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Occupational Code to remove certain requirements regarding experience, education, and references from the criteria an applicant must meet to be examined as an architect, and apply those requirements instead to the criteria for being licensed as an architect.

Currently, to be examined as an architect, an applicant must provide documentation of at least eight years of professional experience in architectural work satisfactory to the board of architects, including at least six years of education, and provide at least five references, including three from licensed

architects who have personal knowledge of the applicant's professional experience.

Under the bill, an individual would have to provide the required documentation and references in order to be licensed as an architect rather than to be examined as an architect. (The bill would retain a requirement that an applicant provide evidence of completion of a first professional degree or further degree in architecture, satisfactory to the board of architects, to be examined as an architect.)

MCL 339.2004 & 339.2005

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

According to testimony before the Senate Economic Development and Regulatory Reform Committee, Michigan is losing graduates of architectural programs to other states because of this State's requirement that someone with a degree in architecture have eight years of professional experience just to sit for the architecture exam. Reportedly, 40 other states allow architecture graduates to take the exam any time after graduation, and most candidates do so during their apprenticeship period, which typically consists of three years' work after graduation. By transferring the professional experience and reference requirements from the section of the Occupational Code that addresses

requirements for being examined to the section that deals with licensing criteria, the bill would allow a recent graduate to take the exam soon after receiving his or her degree, as is done in other states. Michigan's licensing standards would remain stringent, however, as a candidate still would have to document eight years of professional experience, including at least six years of education, and provide at least five references, including three from licensed architects with personal knowledge of the applicant's professional experience, to qualify for a license. The current system contributes to the so-called "brain drain" of educated young professionals from Michigan, but allowing recent graduates to take the exam sooner would encourage them to remain in the State.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Elizabeth Pratt
Maria Tyszkiewicz

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.