
Financial Institutions & Insurance Committee

HB 2608

Brief Description: Concerning regulation and licensing of residential mortgage loan servicers and services.

Sponsors: Representatives Nelson, Kirby, Chase, Simpson, Morrell, Maxwell and Moeller; by request of Department of Financial Institutions.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires licensure of persons performing residential loan modifications.
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Hearing Date: 1/14/10

Staff: Jon Hedegard (786-7127).

Background:

In 2009, the Legislature passed bills significantly altering the licensing provisions for mortgage loan originator licensees under the Consumer Loan Act (CLA) and the Mortgage Brokers Practices Act (MBPA). The CLA and the MBPA both require the following from mortgage loan originator licensees:

- criminal history and credit background checks;
- pre-licensure education;
- pre-licensure testing;
- continuing education;
- financial responsibility requirements; and
- licensing mortgage loan originators through a Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry (NMLS&R).

The Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) has regulatory oversight of CLA and MBPA licensees. There are a host of required disclosures, reporting, record-keeping, and prohibited

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practices in the CLA and the MBPA. Noncompliance may lead to disciplinary, civil, or criminal actions.

There are additional statutory requirements for residential mortgage lending and disclosure requirements for residential mortgage loan servicing.

Summary of Bill:

Consumer Loan Act (CLA)

The definition of "mortgage loan originator" is altered to include persons who, for compensation, perform or hold themselves out as being able to perform residential loan modifications.

The following new definitions are added to the CLA:

- "residential mortgage loan modification";
- "residential mortgage loan modification services";
- "service or servicing a loan";
- "service or servicing a reverse mortgage loan"; and
- "third-party residential loan modification services".

No person may service residential mortgage loans without being licensed or exempt from licensing under the CLA. Licensing includes fees, background checks, and financial responsibility requirements. An applicant or a principal of an applicant for a CLA license may not have provided unlicensed residential mortgage loan modification services in the five years prior to the license application. The Director of the DFI (Director) may deny a license for revocation or suspension if a license related to lending, settlement services, or loan servicing was suspended by this state, another state, or the federal government within five years of the date of the application.

The Director may take actions, including disciplinary actions, against licensees that are residential mortgage loan servicers.

The Director may impose a different yearly assessment on a person servicing a residential mortgage loan than is imposed on other CLA licensees.

A residential mortgage loan servicer under the CLA must:

- file reports through the NMLS&R;
- comply with the provisions disclosure provisions required in mortgage loan servicing;
- clearly disclose fees within 45 days of the date the fee was incurred;
- credit payments in a timely fashion;
- promptly make escrow payments (if it has the authority to make those payments);
- provide certain information and make reasonable attempts to comply with borrower request for other information
- promptly correct errors and refund fees, where appropriate;
- provide a written disclosure summary of all material terms before collecting any advance fees. The DFI must adopt a summary format and must adopt rules regarding a model fee agreement.

Third-party residential loan modifications service providers are limited to an advance fee of \$750 and may not charge total fees in excess of what is usual and customary or that are not unreasonable in light of the services provided.

Provisions related to mortgage fraud are expanded to include persons modifying a residential mortgage loan.

Mortgage Brokers Practices Act (MBPA)

The definition of "loan originator" is altered to include persons who, for compensation, perform or hold themselves out as being able to perform residential loan modifications.

The following new definitions are added to the MBPA:

- "residential mortgage loan modification";
- "residential mortgage loan modification services"; and
- "third-party residential loan modification services".

No person may service residential mortgage loans without being licensed or exempt from licensing under the MBPA. An applicant, a principal of an applicant, or a designated broker of an applicant for a MBPA license (as a mortgage broker or loan originator) may not have provided unlicensed residential mortgage loan modification services in the five years prior to the license application.

A residential mortgage loan servicer under the MBPA must:

- file reports through the NML&R;
- comply with the provisions disclosure provisions required in mortgage loan servicing;
- provide a written disclosure summary of all material terms before collecting any advance fees. The DFI must adopt a summary format and must adopt rules regarding a model fee agreement. The rules may include usual and customary fees for residential loan modification services;
- not charge an advance fee of \$750 and may not charge total fees in excess of what is usual and customary or that are not unreasonable in light of the services provided;
- immediately inform the borrower in writing if additional information is needed or if it becomes apparent that a residential loan modification is not possible; and
- not require or encourage a borrower to (1) waive legal rights or notices, (2) pay charges that are not in the written contract, or (3) cease communication with the lender, investor or loan servicer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 8, 2010.

Effective Date: July 1, 2010.