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**Consumer Protection & Business  
Committee**

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**HB 2355**

**Brief Description:** Creating alternative professional licensing standards.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Vick, Hoff, Harris, Gildon and Volz.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Grants the Department of Licensing the ability to consider competency-based licensing standards for professional and occupational licenses.

**Hearing Date:** 1/22/20

**Staff:** Robbi Kesler (786-7153).

**Background:**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) regulates a number of businesses and professions. For regulated professions, the DOL issues licenses and ensures compliance with professional standards and laws.

Examples of professions regulated directly by the DOL, or in coordination with a board or commission, include:

- architects,
- cosmetologists,
- funeral directors,
- real estate brokers, and
- security guards.

Requirements for a professional license, certificate, registration, or permit vary considerably. Some professions may require:

- college level coursework;

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- experience;
- an examination;
- some type of background check;
- a surety bond, insurance, or other minimum financial standards;
- minimum safety standards;
- continuing education for licensees; or
- duties of care for clients.

Many professions have provisions for some form of reciprocity or consideration of experience from other states or military service. In addition, the DOL and other licensing authorities must expedite the issuance of a broad range of professional licenses, certificates, registrations, or permits for qualified military spouses.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) may issue an occupational license, without regard to other requirements, to an applicant if the applicant meets all competency-based licensing requirements for a specific occupational license, as determined by the DOL.

"Competency-based licensing requirement" is defined as a practical assessment of knowledge and skills that clearly demonstrate a person is prepared to engage in an occupation or profession regulated by the DOL. The DOL must determine the competency based licensing requirement is at least as effective as examination-based occupational licensing requirements at demonstrating proficiency and protecting the health and safety of the public. A competency-based licensing requirement may include, but is not limited to, any combination of training, experience, testing, or observation.

"Occupational license" is defined as a license, certificate, registration, permit, or other form of authorization required by law or a state agency rule that must be obtained by an individual to engage in a particular occupation or profession which is regulated by the DOL.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 15, 2020.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.