

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5794

As of January 9, 2024

Title: An act relating to architecture licensing examinations.

Brief Description: Concerning architecture licensing examinations.

Sponsors: Senators King, Keiser and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/09/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the provisions requiring applicants for architect certificates of registration to pass all sections of the exam within five years.
- Requires applicants to pass all sections of the exam as prescribed by the State Board for Architects.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Susan Jones (786-7404)

Background: Architect Certificate of Registration. It is unlawful for any person to practice or offer to practice architecture in this state, or to use in connection with the person's name or otherwise assume, use, or advertise any title or description including the word "architect," "architecture," "architectural," or language tending to imply the person is an architect, unless the person is registered or authorized to practice in the state of Washington. A certificate of registration must be granted by the Department of Licensing (DOL) to all qualified applicants who are certified by the State Board for Architects (Board) as having passed the required examination and as having given satisfactory proof of completion of the required experience. The application and examination fees are determined by DOL.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Architect means an individual who is registered under this chapter to practice architecture. The practice of architecture means the rendering of any service or related work requiring architectural education, training, and experience, in connection with the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design for construction of alterations or additions to the structures, including, but not specifically limited to, predesign services, schematic design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract.

Applicants. An applicant for registration as an architect must be of a good moral character, at least eighteen years of age, and have:

- an accredited architectural degree and complete a structured training program approved by the Board; or
- a high school diploma or equivalent and at least eight years of practical architectural work experience, including the completion of a structured training program under the direct supervision of an architect as determined by the Board. At least three of the years of required experience outside of the structured training program must be under the direct supervision of an architect, which may include designing buildings as a principal activity and postsecondary education as determined by the Board.

The Board may approve up to four years of practical architectural work experience for postsecondary education courses in architecture, architectural technology, or a related field, as determined by the Board, including courses completed in a community or technical college if the courses are equivalent to courses in an accredited architectural degree program.

Examinations. Applications for examination must be filed as the Board prescribes by rule. The examination for an architect's certificate of registration must be held at least annually. The Board determines the time and place of the exam, and the content, scope, and grading process of the exam. The Board may adopt an appropriate national examination and grading procedure.

Applicants who fail to pass any section of the examination must be permitted to retake the parts failed as prescribed by the Board. Applicants have five years from the date of the first passed examination section to pass all remaining sections. If the entire examination is not successfully completed within five years, any sections that were passed more than five years prior must be retaken. If a candidate fails to pass all remaining sections within the initial five-year period, the candidate is given a new five-year period from the date of the second oldest passed section. All sections of the examination must be passed within a single five-year period for the applicant to be deemed to have passed the complete examination.

Applicants for registration may begin taking the examination upon enrollment in a structured training program as approved by the Board.

Summary of Bill: The provisions regarding applicants passing all sections of the exam within five years are removed. Applicants must pass all sections of the exam as prescribed by the Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill is straightforward. It allows applicants to continue to take the exam and removes the 5-year rolling clock.

The path to architecture licensing in Washington is one of the most progressive. Washington licensure allows a means for individuals with a high school diploma to become licensed. This allows individuals to enter the workforce early and through years of on-the-job experience to become integral to the success of the professional practices in which they work.

The bill removes the unnecessary impediments to licensure for candidates of diverse backgrounds including women, people of color, parents, and military family members, who are often relocated. They have other obligations that eat away at their available time.

The six current test sections, which must be passed, are challenging and take careful study. The running clock adds unnecessary stress. There is no real benefit to protect the health and welfare of the public to the outdated requirement to pass the test in 5 years. The bill maintains the rigor of exam. The bill helps increase reciprocal licensure.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Curtis King, Prime Sponsor; Jared Zurn, National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB); Scott Harm, WA State Board of Architectural Registration - Board Chair; Neha Goel, AIAWA.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.