

**SB 855 -1, -2, -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Senate Committee On Business and General Government**

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**Meeting Dates:** 4/4, 4/9

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs professional licensing boards that regulate an occupational or professional service to develop pathways to licensure, certification, or other authorization for persons who are noncitizens. Requires these licensing boards to report by November 30, 2019, to Legislative Assembly on progress in meeting these requirements. Becomes operative July 1, 2020. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Obstacles to entering licensed professions for highly skilled immigrants and refugees
- Social and economic costs of not utilizing skills and training of immigrants and refugees
- Results of current program to help immigrant and refugees with medical training to become credentialed nurses
- Relative merits of creating paths to occupational licensure for immigrants and refugees

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

-1 Removes requirement for professional licensing boards that regulate an occupational or professional service to develop pathways to licensure, certification, or other authorization for persons who are noncitizens. Requires professional licensing boards to study manner in which persons who are noncitizens become licensed, and to develop and implement methods to reduce barriers to licensure for applicants who may be noncitizens.

-2 Replaces the measure. Directs professional licensing boards that license, certify, or otherwise authorize individuals to provide an occupational or professional service to study the manner in which persons who are noncitizens become licensed, certified, or authorized, and criminal background criteria and character standards used to approve applicants. Requires licensing boards to report on methods to reduce barriers to license, certification, or authorization for noncitizens and individuals who may not qualify based on criminal background or character standards.

-3 Removes requirement for professional licensing boards that regulate an occupational or professional service to develop pathways to licensure, certification, or other authorization for persons who are noncitizens. Requires professional licensing boards to study manner in which persons who are immigrants and refugees become licensed, and to develop and implement methods to reduce barriers to licensure for applicants who may be immigrants or refugees.

**BACKGROUND:**

Current regulations require construction contractors, landscape contractors, athletic trainers, cosmetologists, nurse assistants and many others to obtain an occupational license in order to engage in that profession.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, occupational licensing is a barrier to nearly 2 million skilled immigrants who are underemployed or working in low-skilled jobs instead of their field, resulting in \$40 billion in foregone wages annually and \$10 billion in lost federal, state, and local tax payments.

Senate Bill 855 requires state entities that administer and enforce occupational licensing to develop pathways to professional authorization for noncitizens, and report to the Legislative Assembly on their progress by November 30, 2019.

PRELIMINARY