

By: Gervin-Hawkins

H.B. No. 2624

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the licensing and regulation of certain legal
paraprofessionals; requiring an occupational license; imposing
fees.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Subtitle G, Title 2, Government
Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBTITLE G. ATTORNEYS AND LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONALS

SECTION 2. The heading to Subchapter E, Chapter 81,
Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E. ATTORNEY DISCIPLINE

SECTION 3. Chapter 81, Government Code, is amended by
adding Subchapter E-3 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E-3. LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

Sec. 81.0891. DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION AND RULES. (a)
Each legal paraprofessional admitted to practice in this state is
subject to the disciplinary and disability jurisdiction of the
supreme court and the Commission for Lawyer Discipline, a committee
of the state bar.

(b) The Committee on Disciplinary Rules and Referenda
established under Subchapter E-1 shall propose and the supreme
court shall adopt rules of professional conduct applicable to legal
paraprofessionals under Subchapter E-1.

(c) In furtherance of the supreme court's powers to

1 supervise the conduct of legal paraprofessionals, the court shall
2 establish disciplinary and disability procedures for legal
3 paraprofessionals licensed by the court.

4 SECTION 4. The heading to Chapter 82, Government Code, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 CHAPTER 82. LICENSING OF ATTORNEYS AND LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONALS

7 SECTION 5. Chapter 82, Government Code, is amended by
8 adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

9 SUBCHAPTER E. LICENSING OF LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONALS

10 Sec. 82.151. SUPREME COURT RULES. (a) The supreme court
11 may adopt rules relating to an individual's eligibility for
12 examination for issuance of a legal paraprofessional license in a
13 specialty described by Section 82.154 and to the manner in which the
14 examination is conducted.

15 (b) The supreme court shall adopt rules necessary to
16 administer its functions relating to the licensing of legal
17 paraprofessionals under this subchapter.

18 Sec. 82.152. BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS DUTIES. (a) In
19 addition to its duties under Section 82.004, the Board of Law
20 Examiners, acting under the instruction of the supreme court, shall
21 examine the qualification of each candidate for licensure as a
22 legal paraprofessional in a specialty described by Section 82.154.

23 (b) The Board of Law Examiners may not recommend any
24 individual for any legal paraprofessional license unless the
25 individual demonstrates to the board, in the manner the supreme
26 court prescribes, that the individual has the moral character and
27 proper capacity and qualifications for licensure as a legal

1 paraprofessional.

2 Sec. 82.153. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. To be eligible for
3 licensure as a legal paraprofessional, an applicant must:

4 (1) be at least 18 years old;

5 (2) hold a high school diploma or high school
6 equivalency certificate;

7 (3) be authorized to work in the United States;

8 (4) satisfy at least one of the following
9 qualifications:

10 (A) hold a paralegal certificate issued by:

11 (i) the Board of Law Examiners;

12 (ii) the National Association of Legal
13 Assistants; or

14 (iii) the National Federation of Paralegal
15 Associations;

16 (B) have successfully completed a paralegal
17 education program approved by the American Bar Association or the
18 supreme court;

19 (C) have at least five years' employment
20 experience as a paralegal with at least 50 percent of the
21 applicant's workload consisting of substantive legal work; or

22 (D) hold a bachelor's degree or a graduate or
23 professional degree conferred by an accredited institution of
24 higher education;

25 (5) be of good moral character and fitness;

26 (6) have successfully completed an examination
27 administered by the Board of Law Examiners for a legal

1 paraprofessional license; and

2 (7) pay appropriate application, licensing,
3 examination, and enrollment fees.

4 Sec. 82.154. SPECIALTY LICENSURE. (a) An applicant for a
5 legal paraprofessional license may apply for issuance of one or
6 more of the following specialty licenses:

7 (1) a legal paraprofessional license in family law;

8 (2) a legal paraprofessional license in estate
9 planning and probate law;

10 (3) a legal paraprofessional license in consumer debt
11 law;

12 (4) a legal paraprofessional license in
13 administrative law; or

14 (5) a legal paraprofessional license in civil law.

15 (b) An applicant may not apply for issuance of a general
16 legal paraprofessional license.

17 Sec. 82.155. PROBATIONARY PERIOD. An attorney licensed in
18 this state shall supervise a licensed legal paraprofessional for a
19 period not to exceed one year after the issuance date of the
20 paraprofessional's initial license. The supreme court shall adopt
21 rules regarding the supervisory requirement under this section.

22 Sec. 82.156. LIMITED PRACTICE OF LAW BY LEGAL
23 PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN FAMILY LAW. (a) Except as provided by
24 Section 82.155 and Subsection (c), a license holder who holds a
25 legal paraprofessional license in family law may represent a client
26 without attorney supervision in a proceeding as authorized under
27 Subsection (b) by:

1 (1) advising the client about completing and filing
2 necessary official forms; and

3 (2) communicating with the court, an opposing party,
4 or an attorney or legal paraprofessional representing an opposing
5 party.

6 (b) A license holder who holds a legal paraprofessional
7 license in family law may represent a client only in the following
8 proceedings:

9 (1) an uncontested suit for dissolution of a marriage
10 that does not involve the sale or title transfer of real property
11 and does not involve children born or adopted of the marriage who
12 are under 18 years of age or who are otherwise entitled to support
13 as provided by Chapter 154, Family Code;

14 (2) an uncontested application for a protective order
15 under Subtitle B, Title 4, Family Code; or

16 (3) an uncontested suit affecting the parent-child
17 relationship, including a suit joined with an uncontested suit for
18 dissolution of a marriage but excluding a suit filed by a
19 governmental entity under Subtitle E, Title 5, Family Code, that
20 involves only standard conservatorship provisions, standard
21 possession schedules, and child support payments in an amount
22 established by the child support guidelines under Subchapter C,
23 Chapter 154, Family Code.

24 (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a license holder who
25 holds a legal paraprofessional license in family law may not advise
26 a client about preparing a qualified domestic relations order or
27 similar order or form required for the disposition of retirement

and employment benefits and other plans under Section 7.003, Family Code.

Sec. 82.157. LIMITED PRACTICE OF LAW BY LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN ESTATE PLANNING AND PROBATE LAW.

Except as provided by Section 82.155, a license holder who holds a legal paraprofessional license in estate planning and probate law may represent a client without attorney supervision by:

(1) advising the client about completing and filing the following forms:

(A) an authorization to disclose protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Section 1320d et seq.);

(B) a medical power of attorney under Chapter 166, Health and Safety Code;

(C) a directive to physicians and family or surrogates under Chapter 166, Health and Safety Code;

(D) a declaration for mental health treatment under Chapter 137, Civil Practice and Remedies Code;

(E) an annual report by a guardian of a person or a declaration or affidavit for the filing of the report under Subchapter C, Chapter 1163, Estates Code;

(F) a supported decision-making agreement under Chapter 1357, Estates Code;

(G) a statutory durable power of attorney as provided by Subtitle P, Title 2, Estates Code;

(H) a transfer on death deed under Chapter 114, Estates Code;

1 (I) a small estate affidavit under Chapter 205,
2 Estates Code;

3 (J) an application for muniment of title under
4 Chapter 257, Estates Code; or

5 (K) any other official estate planning or probate
6 forms;

7 (2) communicating with a court on matters related to
8 the annual report by a guardian of a person, a small estate
9 affidavit, or an application for muniment of title; and

10 (3) communicating with an opposing party or an
11 attorney or legal paraprofessional representing an opposing party
12 on matters related to the limited legal services described by
13 Subdivisions (1) and (2).

14 Sec. 82.158. LIMITED PRACTICE OF LAW BY LEGAL
15 PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN CONSUMER DEBT LAW. Except as provided
16 by Section 82.155, a license holder who holds a legal
17 paraprofessional license in consumer debt law may represent a
18 client without attorney supervision by:

19 (1) advising the client about completing and filing
20 official forms related to consumer debt; and

21 (2) communicating with the court, an opposing party,
22 or an attorney or legal paraprofessional representing an opposing
23 party on matters related to the service described by Subdivision
24 (1).

25 Sec. 82.159. LIMITED PRACTICE OF LAW BY LEGAL
26 PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW. Except as
27 provided by Section 82.155, a license holder who holds a legal

paraprofessional license in administrative law may represent a client without attorney supervision in certain administrative law matters, as determined by the supreme court by rule.

Sec. 82.160. LIMITED PRACTICE OF LAW BY LEGAL PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN CIVIL LAW. Except as provided by Section 82.155, a license holder who holds a legal paraprofessional license in civil law may represent a client without attorney supervision in a civil suit, other than a family law case or proceeding or a probate matter or proceeding, in which the matter in controversy exceeds \$200 but does not exceed \$15,000, including by:

- (1) preparing, litigating, and settling the suit;
- (2) communicating with the court, an opposing party, or an attorney or legal paraprofessional representing an opposing party;
- (3) perfecting an appeal of a court judgment; and
- (4) administering post-judgment collections, discovery, and receiverships.

Sec. 82.161. RULES AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL SERVICES UNDER SPECIALTY LICENSE. The supreme court by rule may authorize a legal paraprofessional to provide additional services under the license holder's specialty license to engage in the limited practice of law under this subchapter.

Sec. 82.162. REQUIREMENTS OF REPRESENTATION. To represent a client under Sections 82.156 through 82.161, a legal paraprofessional licensed under this subchapter must:

- (1) obtain a self-certification affidavit or unsworn declaration under Chapter [132](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code,

1 signed by the client indicating the client has low income;

2 (2) execute a written agreement with the client
3 explaining the licensed legal paraprofessional is not an attorney
4 and describing the limited scope of the paraprofessional's
5 representation, including, as applicable, an explanation of the
6 limitation related to the amount in controversy in a civil suit, as
7 provided by Section 82.160; and

8 (3) provide the client with a brochure approved by the
9 state bar explaining the steps for reporting potential concerns
10 with the legal paraprofessional's representation or violations of
11 rules governing the paraprofessional's professional conduct.

12 Sec. 82.163. CONSTRUCTION OF SUBCHAPTER. Nothing in this
13 subchapter may be construed to limit a person's ability to provide
14 information related to the state legal system as otherwise
15 permitted by law.

16 SECTION 6. As soon as practicable after the effective date
17 of this Act:

18 (1) the Texas Supreme Court shall adopt the rules
19 necessary to implement this Act; and

20 (2) the State Bar of Texas shall approve a brochure as
21 required under Section 82.162(3), Government Code, as added by this
22 Act.

23 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.