

By: Martinez

H.B. No. 4575

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to an exemption from accreditation for certain private
3 postsecondary educational institutions offering professional law
4 degrees in this state.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 61.313, Education Code, is amended by
7 adding Subsection (g-1) to read as follows:

8 (g-1) For the purposes of Subsection (a), a private
9 postsecondary educational institution that holds a certificate of
10 authority issued under Section 61.3035 may use the term "school of
11 law" or "law school" in the institution's official name or title.

12 SECTION 2. Subchapter G, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
13 amended by adding Section 61.3035 to read as follows:

14 Section 61.3035. EXEMPTION FROM ACCREDITATION FOR CERTAIN
15 LAW SCHOOLS. (a) The board by rule shall establish fair and
16 reasonable standards for issuing a certificate of authority to a
17 private postsecondary educational institution in this state to
18 grant degrees for completion of a professional program in the study
19 of law.

20 (b) The standards under this section must ensure that each
21 student attending the institution receives an education that fully
22 prepares the student for the practice of law in this state.

23 SECTION 3. Subchapter D, Chapter 81, Government Code, is
24 amended by adding Section 81.062 to read as follows:

1 Sec. 81.062. ADMISSION OF GRADUATES OF CERTAIN LAW SCHOOLS.

2 Notwithstanding any other law, a person who holds a degree granted
3 by a law school to which a certificate of authority has been issued
4 under Section 61.3035, Education Code, is entitled to the same
5 right to admission to the practice of law and to be administered the
6 professional licensing examination by the board of law examiners
7 under Subchapter B, Chapter 82, as are persons who hold a degree
8 granted by an accredited law school in this state.

9 SECTION 4. Section 82.0341, Government Code, is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 Sec. 82.0241. UNACCREDITED SCHOOLS OF LAW; EXCEPTION. All
12 matters relating to licensing of persons who were enrolled at
13 unaccredited schools of law in this state are within the exclusive
14 jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the State of Texas, except that
15 a person who holds a degree granted by a law school to which a
16 certificate of authority has been issued under Section 61.3035,
17 Education Code, is entitled to the same rights concerning licensing
18 as a person who holds a degree granted by an accredited law school.

19 SECTION 5. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
20 shall adopt the standards required by Section 61.3035, Education
21 Code, as added by this Act, not later than November 1, 2009.

22 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
23 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
24 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
25 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
26 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.