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(In the Senate - Filed March 13, 2009; March 31, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on Transportation and Homeland
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       Security; April 17, 2009, reported adversely, with favorable Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0;
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       April 17, 2009, sent to printer.)
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       COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 2153
                                                                         By: Huffman
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                                   A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
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                                            AN ACT
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       relating to the booting of vehicles by private entities in parking
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       facilities; providing penalties.
               BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
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               SECTION 1. The heading to Chapter 2308, Occupations Code,
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       is amended to read as follows:
                       CHAPTER 2308. VEHICLE TOWING AND BOOTING
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               SECTION 2. Section 2308.001, Occupations Code, is amended
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       to read as follows:
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               Sec. 2308.001.
                                 SHORT TITLE. This chapter may be cited as
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       the Texas Towing <u>and Booting</u> Act. SECTION 3. Section 2308.002, Occupations Code, is amended
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       by amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivisions (1-a), (1-b),
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       and (1-c) to read as follows:
                          "Advisory board" means the Towing, [and] Storage,
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                     (1)
       and Booting Advisory Board.

(1-a) "Boot" means a lockable road wheel clamp or similar vehicle immobilization device that is designed to
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       immobilize a parked vehicle and prevent its movement until the
       device is unlocked or removed.

(1-b) "Booting company" means a person that controls, installs, or directs the installation and removal of one or more
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       boots.
                              "Boot operator" means an individual who installs
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       or removes a boot on or from a vehicle.
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               SECTION 4.
                             Subchapter A, Chapter 2308, Occupations Code, is
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       amended by adding Section 2308.004 to read as follows:
              Sec. 2308.004.
                                 EXEMPTION. This chapter does not apply to a
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       person who, while exercising a statutory or contractual lien right
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       with regard to a vehicle:
       (1) installs or removes a boot; or (2) controls, installs, or directs the installation and removal of one or more boots.
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              SECTION 5. The heading to Section 2308.051, Occupations
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       Code, is amended to read as follows:
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              Sec. 2308.051. TOWING, [AND] STORAGE, AND BOOTING ADVISORY
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By:

Whitmire

BOARD.

SECTION 6. Subsection (a), Section 2308.051, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

- (a) The advisory board consists of the following members appointed by the presiding officer of the commission with the approval of the commission:
- one representative of a towing company operating (1)in a county with a population of less than one million;
- (2) one representative of a towing company operating
- in a county with a population of one million or more;
 (3) one owner of a vehicle storage facility located in a county with a population of less than one million;
- one owner of a vehicle storage facility located in (4)a county with a population of one million or more;
 - (5)
- one parking facility owner; one law enforcement officer from a county with a (6) population of less than one million;
- 1-61 1-62 (7) one law enforcement officer from a county with a 1-63 population of one million or more; [and]

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- one representative of property and 2-1 (8) casualty insurers who write automobile insurance in this state; and 2-2
 - (9) one representative of a booting company.
 - SECTION 7. Subsection (a), Section 2308.057, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:
 - (a) The commission shall adopt rules for permitting tow trucks and licensing towing operators, [and] towing companies, booting companies, and boot operators.

 SECTION 8. Section 2308.151, Occupations Code, is amended
 - to read as follows:
 - LICENSE REQUIRED. Unless the person holds Sec. 2308.151. an appropriate license under this subchapter, a person may not:
 - (1) perform towing operations; [or]
 - (2) operate a towing company;
 - (3) perform booting operations; or

 (4) operate a booting company.

 SECTION 9. Subchapter D, Chapter 2308, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Sections 2308.1555 and 2308.1556 to read as follows:
 - BOOT OPERATOR'S LICENSE. Sec. 2308.1555. BOOT OPERATOR'S LICENSE. (a) A boot operator's license is required to install or remove a boot from a 2308.1555. vehicle.
 - An applicant for a boot operator's license must be at (b) least 18 years of age.
 - Sec. 2308.1556. BOOTING COMPANY LICENSE. (a) A booting company license is required for a person to operate a booting company.
 - (b) To be eligible for a booting company license, applicant must submit evidence that the applicant is covered by:
 - (1) a general liability insurance policy on a broad
 - form with:

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- (A) a combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage for each occurrence of at least \$500,000; and
- (B) an aggregate limit for all occurrences
- each policy year of at least \$500,000; and
 (2) an automobile liability insurance policy covering the applicant and the applicant's employees for venicle the hired, or otherwise used in the applicant's business, with a combined single limit for each occurrence of at least \$500,000.

 The heading to Subchapter E, Chapter 2308, the applicant and the applicant's employees for vehicles owned,
- SECTION 10. The heading to Subchapter Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows: Ε,
 - SUBCHAPTER E. LOCAL REGULATION OF TOWING AND BOOTING
- SECTION 11. Subchapter E, Chapter 2308, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 2308.2085 to read as follows:

 Sec. 2308.2085. MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE REGULATING BOOTING COMPANIES AND OPERATORS. (a) A municipality may adopt an ordinance that is identical to the booting provisions in this chapter or that imposes additional requirements that exceed the minimum standards of the booting provisions in this chapter but may not adopt an ordinance that conflicts with the booting provisions in this chapter.
- (b) A municipality may regulate the fees that may be charged in connection with the booting of a vehicle, including associated parking fees.
- (c) A municipality may require booting companies to obtain a permit to operate in the municipality.
- SECTION 12. Subchapter F, Chapter 2308, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 2308.257 to read as follows:
- Sec. 2308.257. BOOTING OF UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLE. (a) parking facility owner may, without the consent of the owner or operator of an unauthorized vehicle, cause a boot to be installed on the vehicle in the parking facility if signs that comply with Subchapter G prohibiting unauthorized vehicles are located on the parking facility at the time of the booting and for the preceding 24
- hours and remain installed at the time of the booting.

 (b) A boot operator that installs a boot on a vehicle must 2-66 affix a conspicuous notice to the vehicle's front windshield or 2-68 driver's side window stating:
 - (1) that the vehicle has been booted and damage may

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occur if the vehicle is moved;
(2) the date and time the boot was installed;

(3) the name, address, and telephone number of the booting company;

(4) a telephone number that is answered 24 hours a day the owner or operator of the vehicle to arrange enable removal of the boot;

the amount of the fee for removal of the boot and any associated parking fees; and

(6) notice of the right of a vehicle owner or vehicle operator to a hearing under Subchapter J.

(c) On removal of a boot, the boot operator shall provide a receipt to the vehicle owner or operator stating:

(1) the name of the person who removed the boot;

(2)

the date and time the boot was removed; the name of the person to whom the (3) vehicle was

released;

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the amount of fees paid for removal of the boot and (4)any associated parking fees; and

(5) the right of the vehicle owner or operator to a

hearing under Subchapter J.

(d) The booting company shall maintain a copy of the receipt its place of business for a period of three years. A peace officer has the right, on request, to inspect and copy the records

to determine compliance with the requirements of this section.

(e) A booting company shall accept payment by an electronic check, debit card, or credit card for any fee or charge associated with the removal of a boot. A booting company may not collect a fee for any charge associated with the removal of a boot from a person who offers to pay the charge with an electronic check, debit card, or credit card form of payment that the booting company is not

equipped to accept.
SECTION 13. Section 2308.301, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2308.301. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGN PROHIBITING UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (a)(2)(B) and Section 2308.304 or 2308.305, an unauthorized vehicle may not be towed under Section 2308.252(a)(1) or booted under Section 2308.257 unless a sign prohibiting unauthorized vehicles on a parking facility is:

(1) facing and conspicuously visible to the driver of a vehicle that enters the facility;

(2) located:

(A) on the right or left side of each driveway or curb-cut through which a vehicle can enter the facility, including an entry from an alley abutting the facility; or

at intervals along the entrance so that no (B) entrance is farther than 25 feet from a sign if:

(i) curbs, access barriers, landscaping, or driveways do not establish definite vehicle entrances onto a parking facility from a public roadway other than an alley; and

(ii) the width of an entrance exceeds 35

3**-**53 feet;

> permanently mounted on a pole, post, permanent (3) wall, or permanent barrier;

(4) installed on the parking facility; and

(5) installed so that the bottom edge of the sign is no lower than five feet and no higher than eight feet above ground level.

- (b) Except as provided by Section 2308.305, an unauthorized vehicle may be towed under Section 2308.252(a)(1) or booted under 2308.257 only if each sign prohibiting unauthorized Section vehicles:
 - (1)is made of weather-resistant material;
 - (2)is at least 18 inches wide and 24 inches tall;
- contains the international symbol for towing (3) vehicles;

3-67 3-68 (4)contains a statement describing who may park in 3-69 the parking facility and prohibiting all others;

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bears the words "Unauthorized Vehicles Will Be 4-1 (5) 4-2 Towed or Booted at Owner's or Operator's Expense";

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- contains a statement of the days and hours of (6) towing and booting enforcement; and
- (7) contains a number, including the area code, of a telephone that is answered 24 hours a day to enable an owner or operator of a vehicle to locate a towed [the] vehicle or to arrange for removal of a boot from a vehicle.
- SECTION 14. Subsections (c) and (e), Section 2308.302, Occupations Code, are amended to read as follows:
- (c) The portion of the sign immediately below international towing symbol must contain the words "Towing And Booting Enforced" [or the information provided by Section $\overline{2308.301(b)(4)}$] in lettering at least two inches in height. The lettering on this portion of the sign must consist of white letters on a bright red background.
- (e) The bottommost portion of the sign must contain the telephone <u>numbers</u> [<u>number</u>] required by Section 2308.301(b), in lettering at least one inch in height and may, if the facility owner chooses or if an applicable municipal ordinance requires, include the name and address of the storage facility to which an unauthorized vehicle will be removed. The lettering on this portion of the sign must consist of white letters on a bright red background.
- SECTION 15. The heading to Subchapter I, Chapter 2308, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:
- SUBCHAPTER I. REGULATION OF TOWING COMPANIES, BOOTING COMPANIES, AND PARKING FACILITY OWNERS
- SECTION 16. Section 2308.401, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:
- PARKING FACILITY OWNER PROHIBITED Sec. 2308.401. FROM RECEIVING FINANCIAL GAIN FROM TOWING COMPANY OR BOOTING COMPANY. A parking facility owner may not directly or indirectly accept anything of value from:
- (1) a towing company in connection with the removal of a vehicle from a parking facility; or
- (2) a booting company in connection with booting a vehicle in a parking facility.
- (b) A parking facility owner may not have a direct or indirect monetary interest in:
- (1) a towing company that for compensation removes unauthorized vehicles from a parking facility in which the parking facility owner has an interest; or
- (2) a booting company that for compensation boots vehicles in a parking facility in which the parking facility owner a booting company that for compensation boots has an interest.
- SECTION 17. Section 2308.402, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:
- TOWING COMPANY BOOTING COMPANY AND Sec. 2308.402. PROHIBITED FROM FINANCIAL INVOLVEMENT WITH PARKING FACILITY OWNER. (a) A towing company or booting company may not directly or indirectly give anything of value to a parking facility owner in connection with $\underline{:}$
- <u>(1)</u> the removal of a vehicle from a parking facility; or
 - the booting of a vehicle in a parking facility.
- A towing company or booting company may not have a direct or indirect monetary interest in a parking facility:
- (1) from which the towing company for compensation
- removes unauthorized vehicles; or
 (2) in which the booting company for compensation installs boots on unauthorized vehicles.
- 4-62 4-63 SECTION 18. The heading to Section 2308.404, Occupations 4-64 Code, is amended to read as follows:
- 4-65 Sec. 2308.404. CIVIL LIABILITY OF TOWING COMPANY, COMPANY, OR PARKING FACILITY OWNER FOR VIOLATION OF CHAPTER. 4-66
 - SECTION 19. Subsections (a), (c), (b)**,** and 2308.404, Occupations Code, are amended to read as follows:
- 4-69 (a) A towing company, booting company, or parking facility

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5-1 owner who violates this chapter is liable to the owner or operator of the vehicle that is the subject of the violation for: 5-2

(1) damages arising from the removal, [or] storage, or booting of the vehicle; and

(2) towing, [ex] storage, or booting fees assessed in connection with the vehicle's removal, [ex] storage, or booting.

(b) A vehicle's owner or operator is not required to prove negligence of a parking facility owner, [ex] towing company, or booting company to recover under Subsection (2)

booting company to recover under Subsection (a).

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(c) A towing company, booting company, or parking facility owner who intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly violates this chapter is liable to the owner or operator of the vehicle that is the subject of the violation for \$300 plus three times the amount of fees assessed in the vehicle's removal, towing, [or] storage, or booting.

 $\overline{ ext{SECTION}}$ 20. The heading to Subchapter J, Chapter 2308,

Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. RIGHTS OF OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF STORED OR BOOTED VEHICLES

SECTION 21. The heading to Section 2308.451, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2308.451. PAYMENT OF COST OF REMOVAL, [AND] STORAGE, AND BOOTING OF VEHICLE.

SECTION 22. Section 2308.451, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsections (c) and (d) to read as follows:

(c) If in a hearing held under this chapter the court finds a person authorized, with probable cause, the booting of a vehicle in a parking facility, the person who requested the hearing

shall pay the costs of the booting.

(d) If in a hearing held under this chapter the court does not find that a person authorized, with probable cause, the booting of a vehicle, the person that authorized the booting shall:

(1) pay the costs of the booting and any parking fees; or

(2) reimburse the owner or operator for the cost of the booting and any related parking fees paid by the owner or operator.

SECTION 23. Section 2308.452, Occupations Code, is amended

Section 2308.452, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2308.452. RIGHT OF OWNER OR OPERATOR OF VEHICLE TO HEARING. The owner or operator of a vehicle that has been removed and placed in a vehicle storage facility or booted without the consent of the owner or operator of the vehicle is entitled to a hearing on whether probable cause existed for the removal and placement or booting.

SECTION 24. Section 2308.453, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2308.453. JURISDICTION. A hearing under this chapter shall be in the justice court having jurisdiction in:

the precinct in which the vehicle storage facility (1) is located; or

(2) for booted vehicles, the precinct in which the

by adding Subsections (c) and (d) to read as follows:

(c) If before a hearing held under this chapter the owner or operator of a vehicle pays the costs for removal of a boot, the booting company shall at the time of payment give the owner or operator written notice of the person's rights under this chapter.

(d) The booting operator that places a notice on a booted vehicle under Section 2308.257 shall include with that notice a notice of the person's rights under this chapter.

SECTION 26. Section 2308.455, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2308.455. CONTENTS Section 2308.454 must include: OF NOTICE. The notice under

(1)a statement of:

the person's right to submit a request within (A) 14 days for a court hearing to determine whether probable cause existed to remove, or install a boot on, the vehicle;

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6-1 (B) the information that a request for a hearing 6-2 must contain; and

(C) any filing fee for the hearing;

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- (2) the name, address, and telephone number of the towing company that removed the vehicle or the booting company that booted the vehicle;
- (3) the name, address, and telephone number of the vehicle storage facility in which the vehicle was placed;
- (4) the name, address, and telephone number of the person, property owner, or law enforcement agency that authorized the removal of the vehicle; and
- (5) the name, address, and telephone number of the justice court having jurisdiction in the precinct in which the vehicle storage facility is located or, for booted vehicles, the name, address, and telephone number of the justice court having jurisdiction in the precinct in which the parking facility is located.

SECTION 27. Subsections (a) and (b), Section 2308.456, Occupations Code, are amended to read as follows:

- (a) Except as provided by Subsection (c), a person entitled to a hearing under this chapter must deliver a written request for the hearing to the court before the 14th day after the date the vehicle was removed and placed in the vehicle storage facility or booted, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.
 - (b) A request for a hearing must contain:
- (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the owner or operator of the vehicle;
- (2) the location from which the vehicle was removed $\underline{\text{or}}$ in which the vehicle was booted;
 - (3) the date when the vehicle was removed or booted;
- (4) the name, address, and telephone number of the person or law enforcement agency that authorized the removal $\underline{\text{or}}$ booting;
- (5) the name, address, and telephone number of the vehicle storage facility in which the vehicle was placed;
- (6) the name, address, and telephone number of the towing company that removed the vehicle or of the booting company that installed a boot on the vehicle;
- (7) a copy of any receipt or notification that the owner or operator received from the towing company, the booting company, or the vehicle storage facility; and
- (8) if the vehicle was removed from or booted in a parking facility:
- (A) one or more photographs that show the location and text of any sign posted at the facility restricting parking of vehicles; or
- (B) a statement that no sign restricting parking was posted at the parking facility.

SECTION 28. Section 2308.458, Occupations Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b), (c), and (e) and adding Subsections (b-2) and (c-1) to read as follows:

- (b) The court shall notify the person who requested the hearing for a towed vehicle, the person or law enforcement agency that authorized the removal of the vehicle, and the vehicle storage facility in which the vehicle was placed of the date, time, and place of the hearing in a manner provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. The notice of the hearing to the person or law enforcement agency that authorized the removal of the vehicle must [shall] include a copy of the request for hearing.
- (b-2) The court shall notify the person who requested the hearing for a booted vehicle, the parking facility in which the vehicle was booted, and the booting company of the date, time, and place of the hearing in a manner provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. The notice of hearing to the person that authorized the booting of the vehicle must include a copy of the request for hearing.
- (c) The issues in a hearing <u>regarding a towed vehicle</u> under this chapter are:
 - (1) whether probable cause existed for the removal and

7-1 placement of the vehicle; 7-2

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- (2) whether a towing charge imposed or collected in connection with the removal or placement of the vehicle was greater than the amount authorized by the political subdivision under Section 2308.201 or 2308.202;
- (3) whether a towing charge imposed or collected in connection with the removal or placement of the vehicle was greater than the amount authorized under Section 2308.203 or 2308.204; or
- (4) whether a towing charge imposed or collected in connection with the removal or placement of the vehicle was greater than the amount filed with the department under Section 2308.206.
- (c-1) The issues in a hearing regarding a booted vehicle under this chapter are:
- (1) whether probable cause existed for the booting of the vehicle; and
- (2) whether a boot removal charge imposed or collected in connection with the removal of the boot from the vehicle was greater than the amount authorized by the political subdivision under Section 2308.2085.
 - The court may award:
 - court costs to the prevailing party; (1)
- the reasonable cost of photographs submitted under (2)Section 2308.456(b)(8) to a vehicle owner or operator who is the prevailing party;
- (3) an amount equal to the amount that the towing booting removal charge and associated parking fees charge or exceeded fees regulated by a political subdivision or authorized by this code or by Chapter 2303; and
- (4) reimbursement of fees paid for vehicle towing,
- [and] storage, or removal of a boot.
 SECTION 29. Subsection (a), Section 2308.505, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:
 - A person commits an offense if the person: (a)
- (1) violates an ordinance, resolution, order, rule, or regulation of a political subdivision adopted under Section 2308.201, [ex] 2308.202, or 2308.2085 for which the political subdivision does not prescribe the penalty;
- charges or collects a (2) fee in political subdivision that regulates the operation of tow trucks under Section 2308.201 or 2308.202 or booting under Section 2308.2085 that is not authorized or is greater than the authorized amount of the fee;
- (3) charges or collects a fee greater than the amount authorized under Section 2308.204;
- (4) charges or collects a fee in excess of the amount filed with the department under Section 2308.206;
 - (5) violates Section 2308.205; or
- (6) violates a rule of the department applicable to a tow truck, [and] towing company, or booting company.

 SECTION 30. Section 2303.058, Occupations Code, is amended
- to read as follows:
- Sec. 2303.058. ADVISORY BOARD. The Towing, [and] Storage, Booting Advisory Board under Chapter 2308 shall advise the commission in adopting vehicle storage rules under this chapter.
- SECTION 31. Promptly after this Act takes effect, the presiding officer of the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation shall appoint to the Towing, Storage, and Booting Advisory Board one representative of a booting company as required by Subsection (a), Section 2308.051, Occupations Code, as amended by this Act.
- SECTION 32. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

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