

Amend CSHB 2408 by adding the following appropriately numbered ARTICLE to the bill and renumbering subsequent ARTICLES of the bill accordingly:

ARTICLE _____. REGULATION OF THE TITLE INSURANCE INDUSTRY

SECTION _____. Section 2502.055(a), Insurance Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The activities described in this section are not rebates. Nothing in this subchapter prohibits a title insurance company or a title insurance agent from:

(1) engaging in ~~[legal]~~ promotional and educational activities that are not conditioned on the referral of title insurance business;

(2) purchasing advertising promoting the title insurance company or the title insurance agent at market rates from any person in any publication, event, or media;

(3) delivering to a party in the transaction or the party's representative legal documents or funds which are directly or indirectly related to a transaction closed by the title insurance company or title insurance agent; ~~[or]~~

(4) participating in an association of attorneys, builders, developers, realtors, or other real estate practitioners provided that the level of such participation does not exceed normal participation of a volunteer member of the association and is not activity that would ordinarily be performed by paid staff of an association; or

(5) providing continuing education courses at market rates, regardless of whether participants receive credit hours.

SECTION _____. Section 2651.007, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Subsections (d), (e), (f), and (g) to read as follows:

(d) Not later than the 20th business day after the date the department receives a renewal application, the department shall notify the applicant in writing of any deficiencies in the application that render the renewal application incomplete.

(e) Not later than the fifth business day after the date the renewal application is complete, the department shall notify the applicant in writing of the date that the renewal application is

complete.

(f) A renewal application is automatically approved on the 30th business day after the date the renewal application is complete, unless on or before that date the department notifies the applicant in writing of the factual grounds on which the department proposes to deny the license under Section 2651.301.

(g) The department may provide a notice required under this section by e-mail.

SECTION _____. Section 2651.009, Insurance Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsections (c-1), (c-2), and (c-3) to read as follows:

(c) Not later than the 20th business day after the date the department receives a notice under Subsection (b), the department shall notify the title insurance agent and appointing title insurance company in writing of any deficiencies in the notice that render the notice incomplete. A notice under Subsection (b) is considered complete on the date the department receives the notice, unless the department provides notice of the deficiencies under this section.

(c-1) Not later than the fifth business day after the date the notice under Subsection (b) is complete, the department shall notify the title insurance agent and appointing title insurance company in writing of the date that the notice under Subsection (b) is complete.

(c-2) The appointment is effective on the eighth business day following the date [the department receives] the [completed] notice of appointment is complete and the department receives the fee, unless the department proposes to reject [~~rejects~~] the appointment. If the department proposes to reject [~~rejects~~] the appointment, the department shall notify the title insurance agent and the appointing title insurance company [~~state~~] in writing of the factual grounds on which the department proposes to reject the appointment [~~reasons for rejection~~] not later than the seventh business day after the date on which the [~~department receives the completed~~] notice of appointment is complete.

(c-3) The department may provide a notice required under this section by e-mail.

SECTION _____. Subchapter G, Chapter 2651, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Sections 2651.3015 and 2651.303 to read as follows:

Sec. 2651.3015. PROHIBITED GROUNDS FOR REJECTION, DELAY, OR DENIAL. (a) The department may not reject or delay a notice of appointment under Section 2651.009 based wholly or partly on a pending department audit or complaint investigation or a pending disciplinary action against a title insurance agent or appointing title insurance company that has not been closed or finally adjudicated on or before the date on which the notice is received by the department.

(b) The department may not delay or deny a license application under Section 2651.002 or a renewal application under Section 2651.007 based wholly or partly on a department audit or complaint investigation of, or disciplinary or enforcement action against, an applicant or license holder that is pending and has not been finally closed or adjudicated on or before the date on which the application is filed.

Sec. 2651.303. NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY OR ENFORCEMENT ACTION; AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL. (a) The department shall notify a license holder in writing of a disciplinary or enforcement action against the license holder not later than the 60th business day after the date the department assigns a file number to the action.

(b) A notice required by Subsection (a) may be provided by e-mail and must provide a license holder fair notice of the alleged facts known by the department on the date of the notice that constitute grounds for the action.

(c) A disciplinary or enforcement action is automatically dismissed with prejudice, unless the department serves a notice of hearing on the license holder not later than the 60th business day after the date the department receives a hearing request from the license holder.

(d) This section does not apply to an action:

(1) that is the subject of a pending criminal investigation or prosecution; or

(2) about which the deputy commissioner of the title division of the department has made a good faith determination,

based on credible suspicion, that a person who is the subject of the action is committing ongoing acts of fraud.

SECTION _____. Subchapter B, Chapter 2652, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Section 2652.059 to read as follows:

Sec. 2652.059. DENIAL OF LICENSE APPLICATION OR LICENSE RENEWAL; APPROVAL. (a) Not later than the 20th business day after the date the department receives a license application or a license renewal under this chapter, the department shall notify the applicant or license holder in writing of any deficiencies in the application that render the application incomplete.

(b) Not later than the fifth business day after the date the application is complete, the department shall notify the applicant or license holder in writing of the date that the license application or license renewal is complete.

(c) An application is automatically approved on the 30th business day after the date the application is complete, unless on or before that date the department notifies the applicant or license holder in writing of the factual grounds on which the department proposes to deny the application.

(d) The department may provide a notice required under this section by e-mail.

SECTION _____. Subchapter E, Chapter 2652, Insurance Code, is amended by adding Sections 2652.2015 and 2652.203 to read as follows:

Sec. 2652.2015. PROHIBITED GROUNDS FOR DELAY OR DENIAL. The department may not delay or deny a license application or a license renewal based wholly or partly on a department audit or complaint investigation of, or disciplinary or enforcement action against, a license holder or applicant that is pending and has not been closed or finally adjudicated on or before the date on which the initial or renewal application is filed.

Sec. 2652.203. NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY OR ENFORCEMENT ACTION; AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL. (a) The department shall notify a license holder of a disciplinary action or enforcement action against the license holder not later than the 60th business day after the date the department assigns a file number to the action.

(b) A notice required by Subsection (a) must provide a

license holder fair notice of the alleged facts known by the department on the date of the notice that constitute grounds for the action.

(c) A disciplinary or enforcement action is automatically dismissed with prejudice, unless the department serves a notice of hearing on the license holder not later than the 60th business day after the date the department receives a hearing request from the license holder.

(d) This section does not apply to an action:

(1) that is the subject of a pending criminal investigation or prosecution; or

(2) about which the deputy commissioner of the title division of the department has made a good faith determination, based on credible suspicion, that a person who is the subject of the action is committing ongoing acts of fraud.

SECTION _____. Section 2703.153, Insurance Code, is amended by amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsections (h) and (i) to read as follows:

(d) A title insurance company or a title insurance agent aggrieved by a department requirement concerning the submission of information may bring a suit in a district court in Travis County alleging that the request for information:

(1) is unduly burdensome; or

(2) is not a request for information material to fixing and promulgating premium rates or another matter that may be the subject of the periodic [~~biennial~~] hearing and is not a request reasonably designed to lead to the discovery of that information.

(h) The contents of the statistical report, including any amendments to the statistical report, must be established in a rulemaking hearing under Subchapter B, Chapter 2001, Government Code.

(i) An amendment to the contents of the statistical report may not apply retroactively.

SECTION _____. Section 2703.202, Insurance Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (d) and adding Subsections (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), and (o) to read as follows:

(b) The commissioner shall order a public hearing to

consider changing a premium rate, including fixing a new premium rate, in response to a written [At the] request of:

(1) a title insurance company;

(2) an association composed of at least 50 percent of the number of title insurance agents and title insurance companies licensed or authorized by the department;

(3) an association composed of at least 20 percent of the number of title insurance agents licensed or authorized by the department; or

(4) the office of public insurance counsel[, the commissioner shall order a public hearing to consider changing a premium rate].

(d) Notwithstanding Subsection (c), ~~[at the request of a title insurance company or the public insurance counsel,]~~ a public hearing held under Subsection (a) or under Section 2703.206 must be conducted by the commissioner as a contested case hearing under Subchapters C through H and Subchapter Z, Chapter 2001, Government Code, at the request of:

(1) a title insurance company;

(2) an association composed of at least 50 percent of the number of title insurance agents and title insurance companies licensed or authorized by the department;

(3) an association composed of at least 20 percent of the number of title insurance agents licensed or authorized by the department; or

(4) the office of public insurance counsel.

(g) If a hearing held under Subsection (a) is not conducted as a contested case hearing, the commissioner shall render a decision and issue a final order not later than the 120th day after the date the commissioner receives a written request under Subsection (b).

(h) If a hearing held under Subsection (a) is conducted as a contested case hearing:

(1) not later than the 30th day after the date the commissioner receives a request for a public hearing under Subsection (b), the commissioner shall issue a notice of call for items to be considered at the hearing;

(2) the commissioner may not require responses to the notice of call before the 60th day after the date the commissioner issues the notice of call;

(3) the commissioner shall issue a notice of public hearing requested under Subsection (d) not later than the 30th day after the date responses to the notice of call are required under Subdivision (2);

(4) the commissioner shall commence the public hearing not earlier than the 120th day after the date the commissioner issues a notice of hearing under Subdivision (3);

(5) the commissioner shall close the public hearing not later than the 150th day after the date the commissioner issues the notice of hearing under Subdivision (3); and

(6) the commissioner shall render a decision and issue a final order not later than the 60th day after the record made in the public hearing is closed under Subdivision (5).

(i) A party's presentation of relevant, admissible oral testimony in a hearing under this section may not be limited.

(j) The commissioner shall consider each matter presented in a hearing under this section and announce in a public hearing all decisions on all matters considered.

(k) A party described by Subsection (b) may petition a district court in Travis County to enter an order requiring the commissioner to comply with the deadlines described by this section if the commissioner fails to meet a requirement in Subsection (g) or (h).

(l) Subject to Subsection (m), if the commissioner fails to comply with the requirements under Subsection (g) or (h)(6), a combination of at least three associations, persons, or entities listed in Subsection (b) may jointly petition a district court of Travis County to adopt a rate based on the record made in the hearing before the commissioner under this section.

(m) If the record made in the hearing before the commissioner is not complete before the request for the court to adopt a premium rate under Subsection (l), the court shall hold an evidentiary hearing to establish a record before adopting the premium rate.

(n) After a petition has been filed under Subsection (l), the commissioner may not issue findings or an order related to the subject matter of the petition until after the date the court enters a final judgment.

(o) A district court may appoint a magistrate to adopt a rate under this section.

SECTION _____. Section 2703.203, Insurance Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2703.203. PERIODIC [~~BIENNIAL~~] HEARING. The commissioner shall hold a [~~biennial~~] public hearing not earlier than July 1 after the fifth anniversary of the closing of a hearing held under this chapter [~~of each even-numbered year~~] to consider adoption of premium rates and other matters relating to regulating the business of title insurance that an association, title insurance company, title insurance agent, or member of the public admitted as a party under Section 2703.204 requests to be considered or that the commissioner determines necessary to consider.

SECTION _____. Section 2703.204, Insurance Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2703.204. ADMISSION AS PARTY TO PERIODIC [~~BIENNIAL~~] HEARING. (a) Subject to this section, a trade association whose membership is composed of at least 20 percent of the members of an industry or group represented by a trade association, an association, a person or entity described by Section 2703.202(b), or department staff [~~an individual or association or other entity recommending adoption of a premium rate or another matter relating to regulating the business of title insurance~~] shall be admitted as a party to the periodic [~~biennial~~] hearing under Section 2703.203.

(b) A party to any portion of the periodic [~~the ratemaking phase of the biennial~~] hearing relating to ratemaking may request that the commissioner remove any other party to that portion of [~~the ratemaking phase of~~] the hearing on the grounds that the other party does not have a substantial interest in title insurance. A decision of the commission to deny or grant the request is final and subject to appeal in accordance with Section 36.202.

SECTION _____. Section 2703.207, Insurance Code, is

amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2703.207. NOTICE OF CERTAIN HEARINGS. Not later than the 60th day before the date of a hearing under Section 2703.202, 2703.203, or 2703.206, notice of the hearing and of each item to be considered at the hearing shall be:

(1) sent directly to all parties to the previous hearing conducted under Section 2703.202, 2703.203, or 2703.206, if the hearing was conducted as a contested case hearing [~~title insurance companies and title insurance agents~~]; and

(2) published in the Texas Register and on the department's Internet website [~~provided to the public in a manner that gives fair notice concerning the hearing~~].

SECTION _____. Section 2703.205, Insurance Code, is repealed.