

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 2255
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Business & Commerce
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Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to interested parties, the average age of a master plumber in Texas is 56 years. The parties also note that businesses in Texas are finding it increasingly difficult to hire and maintain qualified, licensed plumbers because of a shortage of capable labor in this trade. The parties assert that, while the aging of the workforce is a contributing factor in this labor shortage, the shortage is compounded by current requirements regarding the number of supervised hours required for eligibility to take the examination for a journeyman plumber or tradesman plumber-limited license, which the parties see as an impediment to entry into and advancement within the trade for potential applicants. C.S.H.B. 2255 seeks to help alleviate this workforce shortage.

C.S.H.B. 2255 amends current law relating to the regulation of plumbing.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 1301.002, Occupations Code, by amending Subdivisions (1-a), (2), (3), and (4), and adding Subdivision (1-b), to define "control valve" and "executive director," and to redefine "drain cleaner," "drain cleaner-restricted registrant," and "journeyman plumber" by providing that each person has worked under the supervision of a responsible master plumber for a certain amount of time or has met certain criteria set forth.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 1301.151(a), Occupations Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners (board) consists of nine members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate as follows:

(1)-(3) Makes no change to these subdivisions;

(4) one member who has been a responsible master plumber for at least five years with at least 10 years' experience, rather than one member who is a plumbing contractor with at least 5 years' experience, as a licensed journeyman plumber or master plumber;

(5) one member who is a licensed engineer practicing in the field of plumbing engineering;

(6) and (7) Makes no change to these subdivisions.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 1301.202(a), Occupations Code, to require a plumbing examiner to hold a license as a plumber issued under this chapter, be knowledgeable of this chapter and municipal ordinances relating to plumbing, and be qualified by experience and training in plumbing practice.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 1301.354(c), Occupations Code, by authorizing the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners, at the applicant's request, to credit an applicant under Subsection (b) with up to 1,000, rather than 500, hours of the work experience required before taking an examination if the applicant has completed the classroom portion of a training program that meets certain criteria set forth in this subsection.

SECTION 5. (a) Provides that the changes in law made by this Act apply only to an application for a certificate of registration as a drain cleaner or drain cleaner-restricted registrant submitted on or after the effective date of this Act. Provides that an application for a certificate of registration submitted before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the application was submitted, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

(b) Authorizes a person who holds a certificate of registration as a drain cleaner or drain cleaner-restricted registrant issued before the effective date of this Act to continue to renew that certificate of registration without complying with the changes in law made by this Act relating to the work requirement under the supervision of a responsible master plumber.

(c) Provides that the change in law made by this Act applies only to an application for a license as a journeyman plumber submitted on or after the effective date of this Act. Provides that an application for a license submitted before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the application was submitted, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

(d) Authorizes a person who holds a license as a journeyman plumber issued before the effective date of this Act to continue to renew that license without complying with the changes in law made by this Act relating to the work requirement under the supervision of a responsible master plumber.

SECTION 6. Provides that the change in law by this Act to Section 1301.151(a), Occupations Code, does not affect the entitlement of a member serving on the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners immediately before the effective date of this Act to continue to serve as a member of the board for the remainder of the member's term. Provides that the change in law applies only to a member appointed on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 7. Effective date: September 1, 2015.