

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1650
By: Schaefer
Licensing & Administrative Procedures
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that there is a nationwide shortage of skilled workers, such as plumbers. There are concerns that in Texas certain overly burdensome and unnecessary requirements in state law make pursuing a career in the plumbing industry difficult, thus exacerbating this issue. H.B. 1650 seeks to help increase the number of plumbers in Texas by waiving certain fee and registration requirements to make it easier for high school students to receive a tradesman plumber-limited license after taking the required classes and passing the licensing examination, as well as by waiving certain continuing education and license renewal fee requirements for a person who teaches plumbing career and technology education classes.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners in SECTIONS 2 and 5 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1650 amends the Occupations Code to authorize a person who successfully completes a coherent sequence of courses in the plumbing trade that are offered through a career and technology education program to apply for and take an examination for a license as a tradesman plumber-limited license holder. The bill requires the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners (TSBPE) to issue the applicable license to such an applicant if the applicant successfully passes the examination and prohibits the TSBPE from requiring the person to register as a plumber's apprentice, pay any fee, or comply with any other requirement of the Plumbing License Law that applies to a person's eligibility to apply for and take the examination. The bill establishes that a student of any age enrolled in a high school is eligible to take such a sequence of courses without so registering, paying any registration fee, or complying with any other requirement of that law applicable to enrolling or participating in those courses.

H.B. 1650 requires the TSBPE to develop the courses in the plumbing trade that are offered through a career and technology education program and requires the courses to be approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE). The bill requires the courses to include an appropriate number of hours of classroom instruction and a practical component and authorizes the TSBPE to credit on-the-job training toward meeting the requirements under the practical component. The bill prohibits a person from providing instruction in a career and technology education program under the bill's provisions unless the person is licensed as a master plumber, journeyman plumber, or plumbing inspector. The bill authorizes such a person to provide instruction in a full-time or part-time capacity as an employee, contractor, or volunteer of a high school. The bill authorizes the TSBPE to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions

relating to career and technology education programs for a tradesman plumber-limited license, including procedures to verify a student's successful completion of the sequence of courses.

H.B. 1650 exempts a person who is employed by, under contract with, or engaged as a volunteer by a school to provide instruction in a career and technology education program under the bill's provisions and who provides meaningful course instruction in the program, as determined under rules adopted by the TSBPE, from the requirement to pay a fee to renew the person's plumbing license. The bill authorizes such a person to renew the person's license and any endorsement without complying with certain annual continuing professional education requirements if the person completes the required hours of continuing professional education every three years. The bill authorizes the TSBPE, in consultation with the SBOE, to adopt rules as necessary to verify whether a person qualifies for an exemption from the required renewal fee or from required continuing professional education, including rules providing for obtaining and evaluating written verification from the applicable school of the person's provision of meaningful course instruction in a career and technology education program.

H.B. 1650 requires the TSBPE to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions and includes the legislature's intent that the bill amend the Plumbing License Law as continued in existence by executive order of the governor.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.