

By: Leach, Jones of Dallas

H.B. No. 1747

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the consequences of a criminal conviction on a person's eligibility for an occupational license.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 53, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Sections 53.004 and 53.005 to read as follows:

Sec. 53.004. NOTICE TO LICENSING APPLICANTS. A licensing authority to which this chapter applies shall include a notice in the application form for each type of license issued by the authority and on the authority's Internet website stating:

(1) that an applicant's prior criminal conviction may be grounds for disqualifying the applicant from receiving a license;

(2) the factors listed in Sections 53.022 and 53.023 for determining whether a prior criminal conviction constitutes grounds for denying an applicant from receiving a license; and

(3) the right of certain students enrolled in educational programs that prepare a person for a license or licensing examination to request a criminal history evaluation letter under Section 53.102.

Sec. 53.005. REPORTING. (a) A licensing authority to which this chapter applies shall maintain a record of the total number of each of the following for each type of license issued by the authority:

- 1           (1) applications received;  
2           (2) applications approved;  
3           (3) applications denied for any reason;  
4           (4) applications denied because of the applicant's  
5 prior criminal conviction or placement on deferred adjudication  
6 community supervision; and  
7           (5) criminal history evaluation letters requested  
8 under Section 53.102.

9           (b) Not later than January 15 of each year, each licensing  
10 authority shall prepare a report of the information maintained  
11 under Subsection (a) for the preceding calendar year and shall:

- 12           (1) submit the report to the legislature; and  
13           (2) publish the report on the authority's Internet  
14 website.

15           SECTION 2. Section 53.021, Occupations Code, is amended by  
16 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (b-1) to read as  
17 follows:

18           (a) Subject to Section 53.0231, a licensing authority may  
19 suspend or revoke a license, disqualify a person from receiving or  
20 renewing a license, or deny to a person the opportunity to take a  
21 licensing examination on the grounds that the person:

- 22           (1) has been convicted of:  
23                   (A) [~~(1)~~] an offense that directly relates to the  
24 duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation;  
25                   (B) [~~(2)~~] an offense listed in Article 42A.054,  
26 Code of Criminal Procedure; or  
27                   (C) [~~(3)~~] a sexually violent offense, as defined

1 by Article [62.001](#), Code of Criminal Procedure; and

2 (2) applied for the license or to take the licensing  
3 examination:

4 (A) before the fifth anniversary of the later of  
5 the date of conviction or the person's release from confinement if  
6 the person's sentence for the offense included a term of  
7 confinement;

8 (B) after the period described by Paragraph (A)  
9 if the person has been convicted of another offense committed after  
10 the offense described by Subdivision (1); or

11 (C) at any time if the offense of which the person  
12 was convicted:

13 (i) is listed in Article [42A.054](#), Code of  
14 Criminal Procedure;

15 (ii) requires registration as a sex  
16 offender under Chapter [62](#), Code of Criminal Procedure;

17 (iii) is under Section [15.031\(a\)](#), Penal  
18 Code (criminal solicitation of a minor);

19 (iv) is under Section [19.04](#), Penal Code  
20 (manslaughter);

21 (v) is under Section [19.05](#), Penal Code  
22 (criminally negligent homicide);

23 (vi) is under Section [20.03](#), Penal Code  
24 (kidnapping);

25 (vii) is under Section [22.01\(a\)\(1\)](#), Penal  
26 Code (assault), and the offense:

27 (a) is punishable as a felony of the

1 second degree under Subsection (b-2) of that section; or  
2 (b) involves family violence as  
3 defined by Section 71.004, Family Code;  
4 (viii) is under Section 22.012, Penal Code  
5 (indecent assault);  
6 (ix) is under Section 22.02, Penal Code  
7 (aggravated assault);  
8 (x) is under Section 22.04, Penal Code  
9 (injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual),  
10 and the offense is punishable as:  
11 (a) a felony of the first degree under  
12 Subsection (e) of that section; or  
13 (b) a felony of the second or third  
14 degree under Subsection (f) of that section;  
15 (xi) is under Section 25.072, Penal Code  
16 (repeated violation of certain court orders or conditions of bond  
17 in family violence, child abuse or neglect, sexual assault or  
18 abuse, indecent assault, stalking, or trafficking case);  
19 (xii) is under Section 25.11, Penal Code  
20 (continuous violence against the family); or  
21 (xiii) is under Section 38.14, Penal Code  
22 (taking or attempting to take weapon from peace officer, federal  
23 special investigator, employee or official of correctional  
24 facility, parole officer, community supervision and corrections  
25 department officer, or commissioned security officer).  
26 (b-1) Subsection (b) does not prohibit a licensing  
27 authority from accepting an application from an inmate imprisoned

1 in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

2 SECTION 3. Section 53.022, Occupations Code, is amended to  
3 read as follows:

4 Sec. 53.022. FACTORS IN DETERMINING WHETHER CONVICTION  
5 DIRECTLY RELATES TO OCCUPATION. (a) In determining whether a  
6 criminal conviction directly relates to the duties and  
7 responsibilities of a licensed occupation, the licensing authority  
8 shall consider each of the following factors:

9 (1) the nature and seriousness of the crime;

10 (2) the relationship of the crime to the purposes for  
11 requiring a license to engage in the occupation;

12 (3) the extent to which a license might offer an  
13 opportunity to engage in further criminal activity of the same type  
14 as that in which the person previously had been involved;

15 (4) the relationship of the crime to the ability or  
16 capacity required to perform the duties and discharge the  
17 responsibilities of the licensed occupation; and

18 (5) any correlation between the elements of the crime  
19 and the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation.

20 (b) A licensing authority may not determine under  
21 Subsection (a) that a conviction relates to the duties and  
22 responsibilities of the licensed occupation for purposes of taking  
23 an action authorized by Section 53.021 unless the authority finds  
24 by a preponderance of the evidence that consideration of the  
25 factors listed in Subsection (a) supports that determination.

26 SECTION 4. The heading to Section 53.023, Occupations Code,  
27 is amended to read as follows:

1           Sec. 53.023. ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR LICENSING AUTHORITY TO  
2 CONSIDER ~~[AFTER DETERMINING CONVICTION DIRECTLY RELATES TO~~  
3 ~~OCCUPATION]~~.

4           SECTION 5. Section 53.023, Occupations Code, is amended by  
5 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c) to read as  
6 follows:

7           (a) If a licensing authority determines ~~[under Section~~  
8 ~~53.022]~~ that a person has been convicted of an offense that is  
9 grounds for the authority to take an action authorized by Section  
10 53.021 ~~[criminal conviction directly relates to the duties and~~  
11 ~~responsibilities of a licensed occupation]~~, the ~~[licensing]~~  
12 authority shall consider the following in determining whether to  
13 take an action authorized by Section 53.021:

14                   (1) the extent and nature of the person's past criminal  
15 activity;

16                   (2) the age of the person when the crime was committed;

17                   (3) the amount of time that has elapsed since the  
18 person's last criminal activity;

19                   (4) the conduct and work activity of the person before  
20 and after the criminal activity;

21                   (5) evidence of the person's rehabilitation or  
22 rehabilitative effort ~~[while incarcerated or after release]~~;

23                   (6) evidence of the person's compliance with any  
24 conditions of community supervision, parole, or mandatory  
25 supervision; and

26                   (7) other evidence of the person's fitness, including  
27 letters of recommendation.

1       (c) In making a determination under this section, a  
2 licensing authority may not take an action authorized by Section  
3 53.021 unless the authority finds by a preponderance of the  
4 evidence that consideration of the factors listed in Subsection (a)  
5 supports taking that action.

6       SECTION 6. Subchapter C, Chapter 53, Occupations Code, is  
7 amended by adding Section 53.053 to read as follows:

8       Sec. 53.053. BURDEN OF PROOF. In a hearing on the  
9 administrative appeal or judicial review of a licensing authority's  
10 decision to take an action authorized by Section 53.021, the  
11 licensing authority has the burden of proving by a preponderance of  
12 the evidence that:

13               (1) the offense for which the person was convicted is  
14 grounds for the authority to take the action; and

15               (2) consideration of the factors required by Section  
16 53.023(a) supports the authority's decision to take the action.

17       SECTION 7. (a) Sections 53.021, 53.022, and 53.023,  
18 Occupations Code, as amended by this Act, apply only to an action  
19 taken by a licensing authority to suspend or revoke a license,  
20 disqualify a person from receiving a license, or deny to a person  
21 the opportunity to take a licensing examination that occurs on or  
22 after January 1, 2024. An action taken by a licensing authority  
23 before that date is governed by the law in effect immediately before  
24 the effective date of this Act, and the former law is continued in  
25 effect for that purpose.

26       (b) Section 53.053, Occupations Code, as added by this Act,  
27 applies only to a proceeding commenced on or after January 1, 2024.

1 A proceeding commenced before that date is governed by the law in  
2 effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the  
3 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

4 SECTION 8. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
5 of this Act, each licensing authority subject to Chapter 53,  
6 Occupations Code, as amended by this Act, shall make changes to the  
7 authority's license applications and Internet website as necessary  
8 to implement Section 53.004, Occupations Code, as added by this  
9 Act.

10 SECTION 9. Not later than January 15, 2025, each licensing  
11 authority subject to Chapter 53, Occupations Code, as amended by  
12 this Act, shall submit the initial report required by Section  
13 53.005, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

14 SECTION 10. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.