

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1803  
By: Harless  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

According to witness testimony provided to the committee, the Association of Dental Support Organizations and the Texas Dental Hygienists' Association report that Texas is having difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified dental health care professionals. According to data provided by the Health Resources & Services Administration, Texas has 264 dental professional shortage areas, the fourth highest in the nation. A 2019 report by the Department of State Health Services also showed demand for dental hygienists is projected to exceed supply for many years. According to the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact set forth by the Council of State Governments, there are currently 12 states that have enacted the compact and 12 others, including Texas, with pending legislation. H.B. 1803 seeks to address this issue to promote mobility and address dental workforce shortages by entering into the compact. The compact would streamline the approval process for licensed dental professionals who are seeking to relocate to Texas and begin practicing and serving this need while still providing important patient safeguards.

### **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 State Board of Dental Examiners in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1803 amends the Occupations Code to enact and enter into the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact with all other jurisdictions that legally join in the compact to facilitate the interstate practice of dentistry and dental hygiene and improve public access to dentistry and dental hygiene services by providing dentists and dental hygienists licensed in a participating state the ability to practice in participating states in which they are not licensed. The bill sets out the compact's provisions, including provisions that relate to the following:

- the purpose and intent of the compact;
- applicable definitions and individual state participation in the compact;
- the manner in which an individual who has a qualifying license and credentials as a dentist or dental hygienist in a participating state may exercise the compact privilege to practice in a different participating state and the ways in which that privilege may be revoked or removed;
- the waiver or reduction of fees charged for a compact privilege for active duty military members and their spouses;
- the authority of participating states to take adverse actions against applicable licensees, including joint investigations with other participating states;

- the establishment and operation of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact Commission as a joint government agency whose membership consists of all participating states that have enacted the compact, with the commission acting as an instrumentality of the participating states through its administration and powers;
- the establishment of an executive board to act on the commission's behalf;
- the commission's rulemaking authority;
- a coordinated database and reporting system of information on all licensees and applicants for a license in participating states, including but not limited to examination, licensure, compact privilege, adverse action, and the presence of significant investigative information;
- oversight, dispute resolution, and enforcement of compact provisions by the commission and participating state governments, as applicable, including the manner of termination with respect to participation in the compact for a defaulting state;
- the process for participating states to amend or withdraw from the compact; and
- the construction and severability of the compact's provisions, as well as the binding effect of agreements between the commission and participating states and the treatment of conflicts with a participating state's laws.

The compact comes into effect on the date on which the compact statute is enacted into law in the seventh participating state.

H.B. 1803 designates the State Board of Dental Examiners (SBDE) as the compact administrator for the State of Texas and authorizes the SBDE to adopt rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2025.