



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Legislation to Review Occupational Licenses Introduced

Madison – Today, State Senator Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield), along with Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Representatives Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield) and Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield), introduced a bill to conduct a review of Wisconsin’s occupational licenses and to establish guidelines for review of proposed licenses.

The bill would create the Occupational License Review Council, consisting of both gubernatorial and legislative appointees, who would be tasked with reviewing the necessity of every license on the books using an objective set of criteria. The Council would then make recommendations to the legislature on potential reforms to Wisconsin’s licensing laws. The bill also sets up a Sunrise Review process that utilizes the same criteria to review any bill that would create additional licensing requirements.

“The role of government is to protect public safety, but to do so in a way that doesn’t needlessly inhibit free enterprise and create barriers to people finding meaningful work,” said Senator Kapenga. “Over the years legislatures have been quick to impose licensing requirements in the interest of public safety, without considering alternatives or reviewing licenses already on the books. This bill will begin a long overdue review of licensing requirements that have piled up over the last century and a half and give legislators real alternatives to licensure.”

Across the political spectrum, there has been renewed interest in reexamining the balance of licensure in the United States, with everyone from the Institute for Justice and Cato Institute to the Obama White House and Brookings Institute supporting reform. While this legislation will not alter any licensed occupation on its own, it will provide lawmakers with objective information regarding occupational licenses and options to improve access to our workforce and reduce barriers to entry.

“This bill will keep our state competitive in a rapidly changing economy by shining light on unnecessary and outdated licensing requirements,” Senator Darling said. “It’s time that we adapt our statutes to reflect modern workplace environments.”

The authors are currently seeking co-sponsors for the bill.

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