

SB 854 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Business and General Government

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Meeting Dates: 4/4, 4/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs professional licensing board, unless otherwise required by federal law, to accept federally-issued identification number in lieu of applicant's Social Security number for issuance or renewal of a licensure, certification, or other authorization to provide the occupational or professional service. Becomes operative January 1, 2020. Takes effect 91st day after adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Personal and economic benefits of helping skilled immigrants and refugees obtain professional licensure
- Challenges of verifying identity using federal tax identification number and potential for fraud
- Potential impact of measure on national certification requirements
- Federal requirement to provide Social Security number when applying for Commercial Driver License

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Requires professional licensing board to accept only a person's Social Security number when required by applicable federal and state statute.

BACKGROUND:

Current regulations require construction contractors, landscape contractors, athletic trainers, cosmetologists, nurse assistants and many others to obtain an occupational license in order to engage in that profession. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, occupational licensing is a barrier to nearly 2 million skilled immigrants who are underemployed or working in low-skilled jobs instead of their field, resulting in \$40 billion in foregone wages annually and \$10 billion in lost federal, state, and local tax payments.

Social Security numbers are used to report a person's wages to the government and determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Many organizations also use the Social Security number as a unique identifier for purposes unrelated to wages or Social Security benefits. Social Security numbers are assigned at birth for citizens; noncitizens who provide specified documentation are also able to obtain a Social Security number. A noncitizen who is unable to obtain a Social Security number can obtain a federally-issued identification number, including an individual taxpayer identification number.

Senate Bill 854 requires a licensing board or agency, where allowed by federal law, to accept a federally-issued identification identification number in lieu of the applicant's Social Security number.