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DIGEST

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SB 291 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Abraham

Present law provides relative to the licensure of architects by the State Board of Architectural Examiners (board).

Proposed law provides for legislative finding.

Present law provides for definitions.

Proposed law retains present law and changes the definition of "architect" to mean an individual currently licensed by the board who demonstrates competence to engage in the practice of architecture.

Proposed law defines "applicant", "approved educational program", "approved examination", "approved experience program", "competence", "firm", "jurisdiction", "license", "licensing authority", "NCARB", "person", "responsible control", and "technical submissions".

Present law creates the state board within the office of the governor and provides for a seven-member board, including five architect members appointed from specified districts and two additional members appointed by the governor. Further provides for the composition of five geographic districts from which architect members are appointed and authorizes the governor to remove board members for inefficiency or neglect of duty.

Proposed law retains present law and provides that legislative changes to the composition of districts do not affect existing board appointments and allows members lawfully appointed prior to such changes to serve the remainder of their term.

Present law provides that the five architect members shall be and shall remain domiciled in this state and in the district from which the member is nominated and appointed, be a licensed architect, and have practiced architecture for at least seven years. Further provides that each architect member of the board shall be appointed by the governor from a list of three nominees elected from each district.

Proposed law retains present law except changes the number of nominees on the list from three to five.

Proposed law provides that an eligible architect seeking nomination shall submit a letter to the board and, if five or fewer eligible architects apply, no election shall be held and all names shall be submitted to the governor. Further provides that if more than five eligible architects apply, the board shall conduct an election to determine nominees.

Present law provides for the nomination process, including submission of names to the governor, procedures for elections when more than the specified number of candidates apply, and eligibility requirements for candidates and voters.

Proposed law retains present law and requires board members to maintain eligibility and avoid relationships that interfere with the board's mission of public protection. Prohibits board members from holding leadership positions in state or national professional architectural associations during their term. Further authorizes the board to recommend removal of a member to the governor for specified causes, including failure to perform duties, misuse of position for personal gain, violations of architectural laws, or criminal conviction.

Present law provides that members of the board serve six-year terms, except for the initial educational or regulator member and public member, who shall serve four- and five-year

terms respectively. Further requires the board to notify the governor of term expirations and provides that vacancies are filled in the same manner as original appointments.

Proposed law retains present law as it relates to board members serving six-year terms, except requires that successors be appointed and confirmed. Provides that vacancies due to death or resignation are filled for the remainder of the unexpired term and requires all gubernatorial appointments to be submitted to the Senate for confirmation.

Present law provides for the power and authority of the board, including quorum requirements, authority to adopt rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, and authority to regulate the practice of architecture. Further authorizes the board to employ staff, expend funds, and as necessary, obtain legal counsel. Provides that Baton Rouge shall be the domicile of the board.

Present law authorizes the creation of the Louisiana Architecture Education and Research Fund.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides for board governance and operations, including election and duties of officers, committee authority, delegation to an executive director, clarification of the board's licensing and regulatory powers, and immunity and indemnification for the board, its members, and agents for actions taken in good faith.

Present law prohibits any person from practicing architecture or using the title "architect" in the state without obtaining a certificate of registration and license from the board and complying with applicable laws.

Proposed law retains present law and makes clarifying changes.

Present law authorizes the board to require up to 12 hours of annual continuing education related to public health, safety, and welfare.

Proposed law repeals present law and instead authorizes the board to establish by rule procedures and requirements for continuing education, including acceptable activities and documentation necessary for license renewal.

Present law requires applicants to pass an examination approved by the board to practice architecture, unless previously licensed. Provides for qualification requirements for examination, including good moral character, satisfaction of felony obligations, an accredited degree, and enrollment in the Intern Development Program, with limited alternative pathways for certain applicants. Further authorizes the board to adopt rules governing the examination and intern development program.

Proposed law repeals present law and instead provides for initial licensure requirements to require completion of approved education and experience programs, approved examinations, submission of an application and fee, paid restitution if convicted of a felony, and to provide grounds that may preclude eligibility for licensure, including certain criminal convictions, misrepresentation, rule violations, and unauthorized practice.

Present law provides for the administration of examinations by the board.

Proposed law repeals present law and instead provides for the process to obtain a reciprocal license to practice architecture in this state.

Present law authorizes the board to issue a license to an applicant who has passed the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) examination, upon application, payment of fees, and certification by NCARB, if the examination is deemed equivalent to that required by the board. Further authorizes the board to evaluate equivalency and require additional evidence of the applicant's qualifications and continued professional conduct.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Proposed law provides that a firm shall be a legally formed business entity and comply with board adopted rules in order to offer or perform architectural services in this state.

Present law provides for fees related to examination, licensure, out-of-state registration, and certificates of authority for firms and limits the amount and frequency of fee increases by the board.

Proposed law retains present law except distinguishes the fee provisions between in-state and out-of-state applicants, applies fees to both individuals and firms for initial or reciprocal licensure, and maintains limitation of fee increases.

Present law requires annual renewal of licenses and certificates of authority, establishes renewal and delinquent fees, and allows renewal after delinquency.

Proposed law retains present law except requires submission of a renewal application, with the completion of continuing education, authorizes the board to deny renewal for noncompliance with continuing education requirements, provides for license expiration if not timely renewed, and clarifies renewal and delinquent fee provisions for architects and firms.

Present law requires the board to annually publish a roster of registered architects and their addresses and provides that the roster shall be received as evidence in court that the names are duly registered architects.

Proposed law amends present law to require the board to maintain on its website a roster for verification of licensure.

Present law requires architects to use the title "architect" in connection with their practice and to maintain a seal or stamp on all drawings and specifications. Provides requirements for use of the seal and prohibits its misuse.

Proposed law retains present law except removes the use of a stamp and requirement of the stamp containing the architects name and the words "Registered Architect, State of Louisiana" and the architect's license number. Requires the seal to be an image authorized by the board.

Present law provides for disciplinary actions, revocation, suspension, probation, reprimand, admonishment, and fines.

Proposed law amends present law to provide for rescission of licensure and amends the acts that allow the board to take action against a licensee.

Present law authorizes the board to take enforcement actions against persons or entities for actions that include unlicensed practice, misuse of credentials, fraud, impersonation, or other violations, and provides for criminal penalties, civil fines, and administrative enforcement procedures.

Proposed law amends present law to amend the acts that allow the board to take action against the persons or entities.

Present law provides for investigations, hearings, fines, appeals, and enforcement by the attorney general and district attorneys, and allows the board to pursue civil actions and recover costs associated with enforcement.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law authorizes the board to seek injunctive relief to prevent violations of present law and allows courts to impose civil penalties, including attorney fees, costs, and expenses, with a minimum penalty of \$1,000.

Proposed law retains present law and adds that injunction proceedings shall be summary and tried without a jury and that violations of an injunction constitute contempt of court.

Present law requires the board to submit an annual report to the governor detailing its activities and recommendations.

Proposed law revises present law to require the report to summarize the board's primary activities during the preceding calendar year.

Present law provides that architectural firms, both domestic and foreign, are subject to regulation by the board, requires firms to apply for licensure after formation or qualification, and authorizes the board to issue a license if the firm complies with applicable laws and rules, thereby permitting the firm to provide architectural services and be subject to disciplinary action.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides that to obtain an initial license to practice architecture in this state, an applicant shall present satisfactory evidence to the board of practical experience of training or experience in the field of architecture.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 37:141-154, 156, 157, and 158; Repeals R.S. 37:146.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs to the original bill

1. Restore the present law definition of "the practice of architecture".
2. Make technical changes.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Commerce to the engrossed bill:

1. Make technical changes.