



# PENNSYLVANIA'S OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE REFORM

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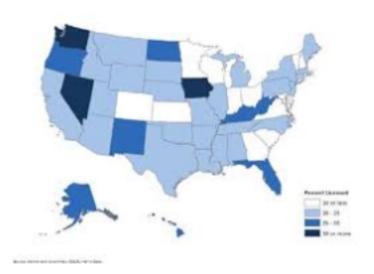
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Licensing is overseen by the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) within the Department of State
- 29 different professional boards and commissions regulate 255 licensure types within BPOA
  - Comprised of members of licensed community and public members appointed by governor and confirmed by Senate
  - Governed by enabling statutes and regulations, and hold regular public meetings
  - Over 1 million individuals are licensed through BPOA
- Independent Regulatory Review Committee (IRRC)
  - Independent commission that must approve all regulations
  - 2-year regulatory process



# OVERVIEW OF REFORM



- October 24, 2017, Governor Tom Wolf signed an Executive Order directing BPOA to review the commonwealth's professional licensure process
- June 11, 2018, BPOA submits a final report to the Governor
  - Outlines multiple avenues for reform to make the process less burdensome for licensees
    - Eliminating 13 license types
    - Licensure portability for military spouses
    - Amending continuing education requirements
    - Repealing the automatic 10-year ban on licensing anyone convicted of a drug felony
- July 1, 2019, Governor Wolf signed Act 41of 2019 into law
  - Requires each board to establish a process for licensure by endorsement for out-of-state licensees
- August 2019, IRRC approved regulations allowing for certain expungements disciplinary actions from records

# CONTINUED REFORM EFFORTS



- The Department of State will continue working with Saint Francis University (SFU) on 2 grants
  - Grant 1: SFU will publish a 50-state comparison of licensure requirements and fees in October, benchmarking Pennsylvania's requirements against the nation.
    - SFU will also complete a survey to PA veterans to understand the barriers they face to receiving occupational licenses
  - Grant 2: Veterans Accelerated Learning for Licensed Occupations Project Streamlining the process for veterans to transfer military occupations into professional licenses
- Sunrise Evaluations to determine necessity of new licensure types
- Ongoing collaboration with Legislature to pursue legislative changes in the fall
  - Example: Good Moral Character
- Increased stakeholder outreach through the appointment of a Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Continued improvements to the online licensure portal system PALS

# ADVANTAGES TO REFORM IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Governor and Legislature both are focused and engaged on making common-sense reforms to system
  - Example: Act 41streamlines the process for licensure for new residents, while ensuring the public health
  - Continued conversation on how to improve the system legislatively and administratively
- Ability to utilize regulations to make changes in a more efficient manner, and allow direct input from the public and legislature throughout the process
- Continued momentum nationwide on easing the licensure process
- Increased stakeholder outreach allows for the Department to learn of new ways to improve the current system, and discuss legislative changes to pursue together

#### BARRIERS TO REFORM

- □ Boards and Commissions
  - Pushback on proposed regulatory changes
    - Example: Continuing education reform
  - Differences on interpreting statutes can lead to misaligned application of requirements
    - Example: Criminal history records and good moral character
- Legislative
  - Some early bipartisan reforms are now receiving pushback
  - Having to monitor legislation to ensure that new licensure categories are not created, or more stringent r requirements are placed on the board
  - Lack of funding provided to the Department of State for implementing legislative changes

# INSTITUTIONALIZATION

- Regulatory System Allows for policy changes to be made without legislation to each individual board
- Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Housed within the Department of State. Primarily focused on stakeholder outreach and works directly with licensed communities on issues they face, and how to constantly improve systems
- BPOA Headed by a Commissioner that is housed within Department of State. Office's sole responsibility is to oversee the 29 boards and related activities
- Online licensing process Front facing application and renewal process, requires continual improvement for usability
- Legislators Many state legislators are professionally licensed, and therefore reform efforts remain salient
- Customer Service Issues raised during the licensure process maintains focus on system improvements