



SENATE BILL 451: Universal Licensure Recognition Act.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Regulatory Reform. If favorable, re- refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	June 9, 2026
Introduced by:	Sens. Moffitt, Jarvis, McInnis	Prepared by:	Chris Saunders
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition S451-CSTQ-60		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) to Senate Bill 451 would require most independent occupational licensing boards and State agency licensing boards to offer universal licensure recognition for licensees of the same occupation in other states, U.S. territories, and Washington D.C.*

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 93B-15.3, enacted by S.L. 2025-61 (H763), requires occupational licensing boards and State agency licensing boards (boards) to issue a license, certification, or registration to any applicant who establishes residency in North Carolina and (i) holds a current license for at least a year, in the same occupation at a substantially equivalent practice level, from Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, or West Virginia; (ii) has passed any exam required for licensure in the jurisdiction in which they currently hold a license; (iii) demonstrates competency in the profession through methods determined by the board; (iv) is in good standing in all jurisdictions in the United States in which he or she has ever held licensure and has not faced disciplinary actions, license revocation, or a disqualifying criminal record; and (v) has paid all fees. This does not apply to the following:

- Any healthcare practitioner licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- Architects.
- Certified Public Accountants.
- Engineers.
- Veterinarians.
- Attorneys.
- Dealers, salesmen, issuers, investment advisors, investment advisor representatives, and athlete agents under Chapters 78A, 78C, and 78D of the General Statutes.
- Practitioners licensed by the North Carolina Pesticide Board.
- Practitioners licensed by the North Carolina Structural Pest Control Committee.
- Practitioners certified by the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board.
- New/used motor vehicle dealers, motor vehicle sales representatives, manufacturers, factory branches, factory representatives, distributors, distributor branches, distributor representatives, and wholesalers under Article 12 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 1 of the PCS to Senate Bill 451 would amend the boards to which the reciprocity requirement applies. It would apply the exemption from reciprocity to clinical social workers,

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sworn law enforcement officers, occupations where universal license recognition would conflict with minimum standards that federal law requires the State to impose as a condition of licensure, and licenses issued to a business rather than an individual. It would also remove the exemption for architects, certified public accountants, engineers, and on-site wastewater contractors and inspectors.

This section would also expand the recognition of out-of-State licenses from neighboring states to all states, territories, and Washington, D.C. It would also modify the requirements for obtaining license recognition by prohibiting boards subject to this section from requiring an applicant to demonstrate (i) that the applicant's license is at the same or substantially equivalent practice level in the other jurisdiction or that the licensure, certification, or registration requirements of the other jurisdiction are substantially equivalent to or exceed the requirements of this State, and (ii) competency in the profession through methods determined by the board. A board could not require an applicant eligible for licensure under this section to complete additional education, training, examination, or apprenticeship, except as otherwise required by federal law or by a State law applicable to all applicants. A board could, however, still require a criminal history check, as well as an examination specific to North Carolina law if it normally administers one for all applicants. Each applicant under this section would also be required to pay a \$25 fee to the board receiving the application to cover the costs of administering this section, but military service members, veterans within one year of separation from service, and spouses of qualifying military service members and veterans would be exempt from the fee.

Section 1 would also create a timeline for boards to process applications for universal licensure recognition and a process whereby an applicant for universal licensure recognition could file a complaint with the Department of Labor, which would review the complaint, make written findings and recommendations for corrective action, and notify the Attorney General and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee.

Section 2 would extend the time for boards to file their first annual report on the number of individuals who applied for, received, or were denied licensure under the universal licensure recognition statute, and would also require reporting on (i) the average number of days between receipt of a completed application for universal licensure recognition and final action on the application and (ii) the number of complaints filed with the Department of Labor as provided in Section 1 of the PCS, and the disposition of those complaints.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would become effective October 1, 2026, and would apply to applications for licensure, certification, or registration received on or after that date.

Aaron McGlothlin, Legislative Drafting Division, substantially contributed to this summary.