



PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COALITION

March 10, 2022

Del. Paul Espinosa
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
State Capitol - Building 1, Room 246-M
Charleston, WV 25305
paul.espinosa@wvhouse.gov

Re: H.B. 4634

Dear Delegate Espinosa:

The Professional Certification Coalition (PCC) writes regarding H.B. 4634, which provides for licensing reciprocity and for alternative pathways to West Virginia licensure for unlicensed individuals based on work experience. The PCC urges an amendment to H.B. 4634 to ensure that West Virginia residents can rely on West Virginia's occupational licensing agencies to protect against occupational practice by unqualified individuals.

The PCC is a nonprofit association formed to address legislation that affects professional certification programs, those who hold private certification credentials, and the many constituencies that rely on professional certification. The PCC's organizational members include non-governmental professional certification organizations, professional societies, and service providers. Our members reflect a wide spectrum of professions, including health care, engineering, financial services, and information technology, among many others. Our founding organizations – the American Society of Association Executives (the leading organization for association management) and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (the leading developer of accreditation standards for professional certification programs) – govern the PCC.

The PCC supports reducing unnecessary barriers for licensed professionals who move to a new state. However, not all state-specific requirements are unwarranted: substantive state-specific licensing requirements protect the public from unqualified or unethical practitioners and uphold the integrity of licensed professions as a whole. Moreover, not all privately issued credentials or work experience can provide assurances of competency or qualifications that would be equivalent to the standards incorporated into West Virginia's licensing laws.

The PCC urges the legislature to amend H.B. 4634 as necessary to reflect these concerns and the attached [Statement of Principles](#).

Specifically, the PCC proposes the following amendments to H.B. 4634:

- Amend Sec. 21-17-4 to add **“The applicant demonstrates educational, training, examination, credentials, and experience substantially equivalent to or more stringent than required of West Virginia licensees in the occupation, as determined by the board.”**

Although the bill as currently drafted does include passing any “required national practice examinations,” that alone does not provide sufficient assurance that unlicensed individuals from other states have comparable credentials. This amendment also acknowledges that work experience alone cannot substitute for meeting other qualification requirements that West Virginia expects its licensees to meet, especially as there is no assurance that the prior work experience was not marked by misconduct or negligent practice. A licensing board can more readily assess whether an applicant has earned comparable credentials and has obtained comparable educational

training than it can assess whether an applicant's job performance for employers in another state equipped the applicant with equivalent knowledge, skills, and competencies.

This bill directly affects protections for the public and also PCC members that credential professionals in regulated occupations, such as health care, in which certification by recognized private certification organizations is a condition of licensure. Certification organizations exist to establish standards of knowledge and skill for a profession, and to assure the public that certified individuals have demonstrated that they are qualified to practice their professions competently and safely. If, due to variations in licensing laws, alternative pathways to licensure allow unqualified or unfit individuals to practice, the public's trust in certified professionals and their regulated professions will be irreparably damaged, especially for occupations in which the public conflates certification status with licensure.

Even PCC members that issue certifications to individuals in fields that do not require licensure have an interest in this issue. Certification organizations – and professional societies that represent individuals who hold certification credentials – rely on the role of licensing agencies to protect the public. By their nature, they are also interested in upholding professional standards for knowledge, skills, conduct, and qualifications. If reciprocal licensure laws create loopholes that weaken how state licensing agencies enforce such standards, this is a matter of great concern to the certification community.

Thank you for your attention to these issues and consideration of the PCC's views. Please feel free to contact us using our contact information below if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



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Current List of PCC Members

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| ABRET Neurodiagnostic Credentialing & Accreditation (ABRET) | American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) | Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards (CFP) |
| ABSA International: the Association for Biosafety and Biosecurity (ABSA) | American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) | Certified Fund Raising Executive International (CFRE) |
| AABC Commissioning Group | American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) | CertiProf, LLC |
| Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP) | American Translators Association (ATA) | Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC) |
| Alliance of Hazardous Materials Professionals (AHMP) | American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) | Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC) |
| American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) | Association for Financial Counseling & Planning Education (AFCPE) | CompTIA |
| American Association of Professional Landmen (AAPL) | Association for Financial Professionals (AFP) | Community Association Institute (CAI) |
| American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics (ABCOP) | Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) | Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) |
| American Board of Certification for Gastroenterology Nurses (ABCGN) | Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) | Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB) |
| American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) | Building Industry Consulting Service International (BICSI) | Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) |
| American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN) | Board of Certification/Accreditation (BOC) | Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) |
| American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS) | Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) | Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA) |
| American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) | Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS) | ETA International (ETA) |
| American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) | Building Commissioning Certification Board (BCCB) | Financial Planning Association (FPA) |
| American Legal Nurse Consultant Certification Board (ALNCCB) | CCIM Institute (issues the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation) | Hearth, Patio, & Barbecue Education Foundation (HPBA) |
| American Medical Certification Association (AMCA) | CFA Institute | Heuristic Solutions |
| American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) | Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) | Hospice and Palliative Credentialing Center (HPCC) |
| American Payroll Association (APA) | Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology (CBIC) | Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) |
| American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) | Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) | Institute of Certified Management Accountants (ICMA) |
| | | Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM) |
| | | Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) |

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| Irrigation Association (IA) | National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) | National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) |
| International Association of Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management (IAHCSMM) | National Board of Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences (NBC-HIS) | Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission (NNCC) |
| International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD) | National Healthcareer Association (NHA) | Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) |
| International Coach Federation (ICF) | National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) | Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) |
| International Foundation for Retirement Education (InFRE) | National Board of Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) | Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) |
| International Information System Security Certification Consortium (ISC ²) | National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) | Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) |
| Investments & Wealth Institute (IWI) | Certification Board for Diabetes Care and Education (CBDCE) | PSI Services (PSI) |
| IT Certification Council (ITCC) | National Certification Corporation (NCC) | Pearson Vue |
| Laborers' International Union of North America Training & Education Fund (LIUNA) | National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) | QualityPro |
| Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB) | National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC) | School Nutrition Association (SNA) |
| National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA) | National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) | Security Industry Association (SIA) |
| National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) | National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) | Society of Broadcast Engineers (SBE) |
| National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA) | National Restaurant Association (NRA) | 100. Specialty Pharmacy Certification Board (SPCB) c/o National Association of Specialty Pharmacy Certification Board |
| National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC) | National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) | Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA) |
| | | 102. Towing and Recovery Association of America, Inc. (TRA) |