Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

Act 143 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

By: Representative M. Gray
By: Senator Irvin

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1164

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT FOR
OPTOMETRISTS; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AUTHORIZE LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT FOR
OPTOMETRISTS; AND TO DECLARE AN
EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 17-90-302 is amended to read as follows:

17-90-302. Reciprocity Licensure by endorsement.

(a) Any person from another state desiring to engage in the practice
of optometry in this state may be issued a certificate of licensure by
endorsement at the sole discretion of the State Board of Optometry without a
written examination upon satisfactory proof that he or she:

(1) Is qualified under this chapter;
(2) Has been issued a certificate or license to practice
optometry by a state, territory, the District of Columbia, or Canada having
licensure requirements at least equal in scope and standards to Arkansas with
whom the board has an agreement of reciprocity standards of proficiency at
least equal to the standards of Arkansas; and
(3) Has engaged in the lawful practice of optometry for a period
of three (3) years of the past four (4) years in the other state, territory,
the District of Columbia, or Canada and has complied with all the
requirements of the Arkansas licensure law at the time of application; and

(4) Has passed an Arkansas jurisprudence examination.

(b) He or she shall be required to The applicant shall pay a fee to
the Secretary-treasurer of the State Board of Optometry for registration in a
reasonable amount to be fixed cover the administrative costs of the
application process as determined by the board.

(c) An application for licensure by endorsement shall be accompanied
by:

(1) The fee described in subsection (b) of this section;
(2) Certification from all other states or territories in which
the applicant has practiced;
(3) A certificate of good standing from each authority which
issued the license, setting forth the applicant's moral reputation and
character, history with the authority, professional ability, continuing
education compliance, and other information or data as the State Board of
Optometry may deem necessary or expedient;
(4) A copy of the therapeutic license held by the applicant;
(5) A copy of the cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification
held by the applicant;
(6) Transcripts from:
   (A) All colleges or universities attended by the
   applicant; and
   (B) An accredited school or college of optometry;
(7) Proof of completion of all parts of the National Board of
Examiners in Optometry examination required at the time of graduation for
initial licensure sent directly to the State Board of Optometry;
(8) Information on past medical malpractice claims and any
disciplinary actions; and
(9) Application to the Identification Bureau of the Department
of Arkansas State Police for a state and national criminal background check,
to be conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(d) Upon furnishing satisfactory proof of fitness as contemplated in
this section, the State Board of Optometry in its discretion may issue a
license to practice optometry to the applicant without further cost except as
otherwise provided in this chapter for the renewal of licenses.
SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that in order to become a licensed
optometrist in the State of Arkansas, optometrists who are licensed in other
states must retake examinations if the optometrist has not taken all parts of
the examination since 1997, which causes a delay in licensure and places a
barrier on optometrists moving into the state; that licensure by endorsement
authorizes the State Board of Optometry to license individuals with
optometrist licenses in other states quickly and easily; that other states
offer reciprocity to optometrists licensed in Arkansas through licensure by
endorsement; and that this act is immediately necessary to ensure that
optometric practices are performed within the State of Arkansas with a
license issued by the State Board of Optometry, to bring Arkansas laws
regarding reciprocity of optometrists as quickly as possible, and to increase
health care access to optometric services for the citizens of the State of
Arkansas. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being
immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and
safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;
(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or
(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

APPROVED: 02/07/2017