

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R1043 BEF-D

S.B. 202
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas is a state with significant shortages in a variety of health care professions, with El Paso being the least staffed city in the state and the United States. Shortages exist in El Paso in regard to physicians, dentists, nurses, and allied health professionals. Statistics also show that physicians are not evenly distributed throughout the state.

In addition to the existing physician shortage in El Paso, a population growth of 65,000 over the next five years is estimated at Fort Bliss as a result of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions. The BRAC impact alone will require an additional 615 doctors by 2017.

In recent years, the processing time for physician licensure applications has increased significantly and physicians who desire to practice in El Paso are experiencing processing times of several months, despite efforts by the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to streamline the licensure process.

As proposed, S.B. 202 requires TMB to grant a provisional license to practice medicine in certain locations to applicants who meet certain requirements relating to licensure, examination passage, and sponsorship.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 155, Occupations Code, by adding Section 155.101, as follows:

Sec. 155.101. PROVISIONAL LICENSE TO PRACTICE IN CERTAIN AREAS. (a) Requires the Texas Medical Board (TMB), on application, to grant a provisional license to practice medicine in a location described by Subsection (c) to an applicant for a license under this subtitle who meets certain licensure , examination, and sponsorship requirements.

(b) Authorizes TMB to excuse an applicant for a provisional license from the requirement of Subsection (a)(3) that the applicant be sponsored by a person licensed under this subtitle with whom the provisional license holder may practice if TMB determines that compliance with that subsection constitutes a hardship to the applicant.

(c) Authorizes a person who holds a provisional license under this section to only practice medicine in certain locations.

(d) Provides that a provisional license is valid until the date TMB approves or denies the provisional license holder's application for a license. Requires TMB to issue a license under this subtitle to the holder of a provisional license under this section if the provisional license holder meets certain examination and licensure requirements.

(e) Requires TMB to complete the processing of a provisional license holder's application for a license not later than the 180th day after the date the provisional license is issued. Authorizes TMB to extend that deadline to allow for the receipt of pending examination results.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective to January 1, 2010.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2009.