

PROFESSIONAL LICENSING: Rigorous for a Reason.

There is a debate taking place about the extent of licensing needed for many jobs. While legitimate concerns have been raised about the level and cost of licensing regulations for many trade and vocational occupations, one fact cannot be overlooked: **Professional licensing is different, it matters, and it is rigorous for a reason.**

AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

There is an important distinction between highly complex, technical professions that have a clear impact on public health, safety and welfare, and the trade and vocational occupations that are the primary drivers of concern around appropriate levels of licensing.

Professionals such as engineers, surveyors, architects, landscape architects, and CPAs are responsible for the physical and fiscal integrity of buildings and financial systems. They design and build public and private institutions - like schools, hospitals, bridges, roads, and tunnels - and ensure the accuracy of business, personal and public financial records, audits, and tax filings.

These professionals must master extensive, complicated codes and laws before they are authorized by their licensing board to certify compliance, quality, and integrity of work. This “seal of approval” confers a legal responsibility for upholding our public and private spaces and financial systems. This level of responsibility - and liability - rightly requires rigorous and ongoing education, examination, and experience.



75%

of voters believe that ensuring qualifications for certain professions is important.¹

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

One-size-fits-all legislation to weaken or eliminate licensing requirements would sweep up highly complex, technical professions and dismantle carefully developed professional licensing systems that protect the public.

These overly broad bills would eliminate the ability to establish, verify, and enforce qualifications. Instead, it would be left to market forces to sort the good from the bad, the qualified from the unqualified. Bad reviews or lawsuits after the fact would replace rigorous education, examination, and experience. That approach simply does not work for ensuring the structural integrity of a building or fiscal integrity of an audit.

67%

of voters believe that consumers are best protected by a system that regulates education, examination, and experience standards—all of which are overseen by a professional licensing board.



[1] Benenson Strategy Group. (December 2019). "Exploring Public Opinion of Professional Licensing."

LICENSING DONE RIGHT WORKS

There is no single, perfect professional licensing model. Licensing must take into account the unique distinctions and requirements of a profession. That is why it is best shaped by those with first-hand knowledge and expert understanding of the profession.

ARPL members have led with responsible licensing models that ensure the education, experience, and testing necessary to protect the public while also providing individuals with:

- Clear career paths
- Consistent and evenly applied licensing requirements across the profession
- Mobility and opportunities to maintain careers across different states

Our approaches to licensing are serving the public and professionals well. These models should be preserved – not destroyed.

Licensing done right works. Let's fix the problem, not create new ones.



ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) promotes a responsible, balanced approach to professional licensing, educating policy makers and the public on the importance of high standards, rigorous education, and extensive experience within highly complex, technical professions that are relied upon to protect public safety and enhance public trust. The Alliance is composed of national associations that represent numerous professions and their licensing boards, and advocates for licensing practices within professions that deliver uniform qualifications, safety, and consistency, while also providing individuals with a clear career path and fair opportunities to maintain that career.



LEARN MORE

For more information on ARPL, please visit responsiblelicensing.org or contact Skip Braziel at sbraziel@responsiblelicensing.org.