

Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform Holds Hearing on WHA-Backed Legislation to Improve Legal Review Process and Expedite Licensure

On May 10, the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform held a public hearing on [AB 202](#), legislation WHA encouraged the [Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licensure](#) to include in its package of reforms that aims to improve the legal review process the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) undergoes when reviewing licensure applications.

The legislation would give DSPS more latitude to complete legal reviews of licensure applications without having to investigate minor or isolated offenses that are not substantially related to the activity of one's license. Additionally, it would allow DSPS to accept an employer's attestation that it has conducted its own investigation and determined the prospective employee does not have an arrest, conviction, or other offense substantially related to the license he or she has applied for. DSPS would have 30 days to accept, reject, or ask for more information on the employer's determination.

WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk, who served as a member of the study committee that drafted this legislation, [spoke in favor](#) of the legislation.

"Since August 2021, WHA has asked DSPS to help with hundreds of licensure delays. Almost 20% of those delays involved a legal review by DSPS, and the delays involved were by far the lengthiest. None of these applicants forwarded by WHA were denied a license when the legal review was finally complete," said Zenk. "AB 202 aims to greatly reduce lengthy and unnecessary delays for legal reviews of remote and isolated occurrences that are needlessly creating months of anxious waiting time for applicants, many hours of compiling documentation for DSPS staff, and many more hours reviewing remote and isolated events by Wisconsin's professional licensing board—events that the applicant thought they had successfully put behind them," she said.



SSM Health's Maggie Fuchs (right) joins WHA's Ann Zenk speaking in favor of AB 202, legislation to improve the legal review process and expedite licensure.

Joining Zenk speaking in favor of this legislation was SSM Health's Interim Director of Medical Staff Services and Central Verification Office Manager Maggie Fuchs.

"SSM Health has seen firsthand the additional time it can take the Department to grant licenses that are subject to a legal review. Cases that we have dealt with have added weeks, and sometimes months, to the timeline to get a provider credentialed. One such example is of a provider who had to wait several weeks for the Department to review a more than a decades-old juvenile record that had been expunged for numerous years. The expungement made things more complicated as the records were not readily available," said Fuchs. "While we recognize that the legal review process is important, necessary, and required for the Department to do, AB 202 would provide flexibility for DSPS to more efficiently process old, minor violations that do not pertain to whether an individual should be licensed for a particular profession in the state."

In addition to WHA, a few other organizations spoke or registered in favor of the legislation. Shae Sortwell (R-Two Rivers) who chairs the committee, said he expects to hear additional licensure reforms considered by the study committee in approximately two weeks and expects the committee to take action on legislation in the committee in the near future.

Contact WHA Vice President of Federal and State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.

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