



NEW YORK STATE SOCIETY OF  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

April 14, 2021

## SUPPORT MEMO

**S 3541 Senator Stavisky**

**A 6809 Assemblywoman Glick**

**AN ACT to require that applicants for licensure as a professional engineer obtain a bachelor's or higher degree in engineering in order to be admitted to the licensing examination.**

This bill amends § 7206 of the Education Law by deleting subdivision 2. Section 7206 (2) currently permits applicants for licensure to forego formal education requirements otherwise needed to qualify to sit for the professional engineering examination. (Today, the vast majority of states have at least a bachelor's degree requirement. In fact, only 14 sister states, in addition to New York, waive the bachelor's degree requirement otherwise needed to sit for the professional engineering license exam.) Twelve years of work experience can be used as a complete substitute for post secondary education, or in the alternative, each full year of college study in engineering can, in the discretion of the licensing board for engineering and land surveying, substitute for two years of the required twelve years of experience. For purposes of the educational requirement, the bill also amends § 7206(1) (2) to expressly include education degrees that the Commissioner of Education deems equivalent to a bachelor's degree in engineering, including, for example, a bachelor's degree in engineering technology. The bill does not alter the experience requirement for licensure which typically follows passage of the fundamental of engineering licensing exam.

In order to help assure public health, safety and welfare, in a world of ever-increasing technical complexity, it is essential that professional engineers secure a firm theoretical background as a prerequisite to licensure and practice. For example, with respect to improvements to real property, professional engineers are required to utilize land less well suited to development as prime parcels become scarce. Moreover, brown field redevelopment and landfill development present unique challenges. Other learned professions, including medicine and law, long ago adopted baccalaureate or other formal educational requirements, in recognition of the need for our licensing laws to adjust to changes in the professions. Prior to the adoption of formal education requirements many professions exhibited "guild-like" barriers restricting entry in to the professions. Not all talented aspirants interested in a particular career enjoyed a level playing field.

New York presently has a number of bridge programs that afford students, at various community colleges, the opportunity to secure a bachelor's degree in engineering at a SUNY school. The NYS Excelsior Scholarship program offers tuition-free attendance to CUNY and SUNY for families and individuals with modest incomes.

Further, the Board of Regents has recently approved on-line engineering bachelor's degree programs which enable a degree to be secured without the need for classroom attendance offering both cost savings and additional convenience. On-line programs allow students, who prefer to learn outside of a traditional classroom, the opportunity to meet the educational requirement via an alternative route. The legislation also includes a transitional provision permitting individuals who are currently pursuing a PE license via the work experience avenue, the opportunity to secure a license without a bachelor's degree by filing a license application within two years and then satisfying current licensure requirements.

As educational opportunities have grown the number of individuals interested in an experience ladder career path have dwindled. More importantly, today engineering companies simply do not hire individuals out of high school as apprentice engineers since high school curriculums do not prepare a student to have the skill set needed for such work. As a consequence, retention of a twelve-year ladder perpetuates an anachronism with little real-world viability.

This legislation recognizes the essential role the professional engineer plays in assuring public safety. Engineers with associates or technical degrees, or limited formal post-secondary education, will continue to be an important part of a project team.

In addition to addressing the formal educational requirements pertaining to licensure as a professional engineer, and setting forth a grandfather provision for parties seeking licensure under the current law, the bill contains a number of technical amendments surrounding licensure fees, the use of interim titles and the scheduling of licensure examinations.

This act will take effect 180 days after it shall have become law and apply to all applications for licensure received on and after such date.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark C. Kriss, Esq.  
Legislative Counsel  
New York State Society of  
Professional Engineers