

Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses Holds Second Hearing

[The Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses](#) held its second hearing on Sept. 27. The committee, which is comprised of four legislators and five members of the public, including WHA Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk, is tasked with reviewing and improving the licensure process in Wisconsin.

While the previous hearing in August focused on how the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) processes licenses, the second hearing focused more on innovative potential reforms the committee could explore.

The hearing began with the Legislative Council providing an overview of a [memo](#) it had prepared with options the council could pursue. The memo included many reforms WHA had proposed at the first hearing, including expanding the utility of 2021 Act 10 expedited licensure paths, extending renewal periods, and reducing the need for DPS to waste staff time on legal reviews for certain minor offenses that are not related to a licensee's occupation. The committee said it would discuss which of these options it intends to pursue at its next hearing.



WHA's Ann Zenk advocates for the study committee to explore expanding opportunities for expedited licensure pathways for qualified health care providers.

Additionally, the committee heard testimony from the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, the Badger Institute, the Council on State Governments, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and the State of Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies and Office of Policy, Research, and Regulatory Reform. Their presentations focused on a cost benefit analysis of whether the quality and wage benefits of licensing certain occupations outweigh the negative impact more licensure tends to have on employment and higher prices for consumers.

The presenters suggested the committee explore sunrise and sunset review laws that have passed in a bipartisan manner in other states, such as Colorado. Sunset laws create a mandatory review process where the state must proactively re-approve licensure for certain professions, otherwise that profession no longer needs to be licensed. Conversely, sunrise review laws mandate that certain

criteria be met prior to establishing a new licensure for a previously unlicensed profession. The groups also supported laws that make it easier for licensed professionals to practice across state lines without obtaining additional state licensure.

The study committee also heard from several art, dance and music therapists seeking to either maintain or initiate licensure in Wisconsin. These groups support licensure to maintain quality standards and see it as something health insurers typically require for reimbursement for such services.

The next study committee hearing will be held on Oct. 12.

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