

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 759 (Valencia)

As Amended July 17, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes individuals pursuing an architect license to use the title "architect-in-training" if they meet specified criteria and pay a fee to be determined by the California Architects Board (CAB).

Senate Amendments

- 1) Require an applicant to submit to the CAB the name and license number of the licensed architect who will be responsible for supervising the applicant while using the title "architect-in-training."
- 2) Require the licensed architect who will be responsible for supervising the applicant to submit to CAB a form agreeing to be responsible for the work performed by the applicant while using the title "architect-in-training."
- 3) Specify that if a licensed architect responsible for supervising a person while using the title "architect-in-training" changes, the person using the title must notify the CAB of the change within 30 days and provide the name and license number of the subsequent licensed architect who will be responsible for supervising the person while using the title.
- 4) Authorize a person using the "architect-in-training" title to request to have their authorization to use the title placed on inactive status and authorizes the CAB to reactivate an authorization to use the title upon receipt of the name and license number of the subsequent licensed architect who will be responsible for supervising the applicant while using the title.
- 5) Extend the sunset date by one year.
- 6) Authorize the CAB to investigate the actions of any person using the title "architect-in-training" and to suspend or revoke an active authorization to use that title for specified reasons.
- 7) Subject a licensed architect who is responsible for supervising a person using the title "architect-in-training" to disciplinary action for any violation committed by the person using that title within the course and scope of their employment.
- 8) Make conforming changes.

COMMENTS

California Architects Board. The CAB is responsible for administering and enforcing the Architects Practice Act, which includes the licensure of architects. There are more than 21,000 licensed architects, and approximately 10,000 candidates pursuing a license, in California.

Licensure requirements. While there are four pathways to obtaining a license, each requires eight years of education and/or experience and 3,740 hours of supervised professional experience or

the development of a work portfolio (for experienced design professionals). Candidates must complete at least five years of education and/or architectural work experience to take the six-part licensing exam from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB).

Attrition. According to the NCARB, 36% of candidates stop pursuing licensure, a process that takes 13.3 years, on average, in the United States. While attrition rates are comparable for men and women, there are significant racial and ethnic disparities nationally. Attrition rates also vary considerably by age, with older candidates having higher rates of attrition than younger candidates. The NCARB has further identified that completing the supervised professional experience requirement "is the most common pinch point" for candidates.

Future Title Task Force. In 2014, the NCARB convened a Future Title Task Force to consider possible titles for individuals on the path to licensure. The Task Force was established following concerns about the credibility of the pre-licensure title "intern." At that time, 28 jurisdictions had laws or rules that addressed intern titles. The Task Force recommended restricting the role of regulation to the title "architect," which should only apply to licensed individuals. The Task Force further recommended that no title held by individuals pursuing licensure is needed.

Title protection. "Architect" is a protected title reserved for architects licensed by the CAB. Anyone who uses the word architect, architectural, or architecture, or any abbreviations or confusingly similar variations in their title without being an architect licensed by the board is guilty of a misdemeanor. As such, no person may refer to themselves as an "architect-in-training", including those actively pursuing licensure. This bill would authorize a qualifying individual to use the title "architect-in-training" if specified conditions are met. The proponents of this bill argue that the ability to use the "architect-in-training" title will reduce attrition, which is worse among minority candidates.

Prior legislative consideration. In 2016, AIA-CA sponsored SB 1132 (Galgiani), the final version of which was similar to this bill. That bill was vetoed. In his veto message, Governor Jerry Brown stated: "In May 2015, this very same Board discouraged the use of any title that implied a person was an architect, stating 'architects are those who have met all the requirements to become licensed. Everyone else is not an architect.' I agree with this assessment." Most recently, the Legislature considered this proposal as part of the CAB's 2024 sunset review. The proposal was ultimately left out of the CAB's sunset review bill.

According to the Author

"Architectural candidates face significant challenges due to the extended timeline required to obtain a license. On average, it takes 13.3 years to complete this process, leading many aspiring architects to abandon their training and studies after just five years, roughly halfway through the requirements. This issue is further compounded by disparities in licensure timelines.

Demographic data shows that white candidates tend to earn their licenses in less time and are more likely to be licensed within 10 years compared to Black candidates. [This bill] seeks to address these barriers and promote diversity in the architectural profession by encouraging future architects to remain on the path towards licensure by allowing candidates to use the title "Architect-in-Training." This bill provides recognition and motivation to help them persevere and achieve their professional goals."

Arguments in Support

As the sponsor of this bill, the *American Institute of Architects – California* writes in support:

The process of becoming a licensed architect in California is lengthy and rigorous, requiring at least five years of education, three years of supervised experience, completion of the Architectural Experience Program (ACP), and passing the Architect Registration Examinations (ARE) (six individual exams) along with the California Supplemental Exam. This process results in an average time to licensure of just over 13 years according to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). Despite these significant milestones, individuals on this path are currently prohibited from using any variation of the title "architect." Instead, they must adopt generic job titles such as "designer" or "intern," which fail to appropriately recognize their specialized expertise and commitment to the profession. [This bill] proposes a much-needed change by allowing those who have passed the first division of the ARE to use the title, "Architect-in-Training" (AIT). This aligns with existing title structures in professions such as engineering, land surveying, and geology, where "in-training" designations are widely recognized and help individuals progress toward full licensure. Furthermore, at least 28 other states already provide title options including the term "architect" for architectural licensure candidates, making California an outlier.

Arguments in Opposition

There is no opposition on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) The California Architects Board reports costs of approximately \$264,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 and \$248,000 in FY 2027-28 and annually ongoing for additional staff to establish the title, review applications, and conduct enforcement activities (California Architects Board Fund). Fee revenues may offset the board's administrative costs to some extent; however, costs will not be offset until the board is able to determine, establish, and collect title application fees.
- 2) The Office of Information Services within the Department of Consumer Affairs notes an absorbable IT impact of approximately \$6,000.

VOTES:

ASM BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS: 18-0-0

YES: Berman, Flora, Ahrens, Alanis, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Caloza, Chen, Elhawary, Hadwick, Haney, Irwin, Jackson, Krell, Lowenthal, Macedo, Nguyen, Pellerin

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin,

Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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