

Committee on Education

CS/CS/CS/HB 115 — Keep Our Graduates Working Act

by Commerce Committee; Health Quality Subcommittee; Business and Professions Subcommittee; and Rep. Duran and others (CS/SB 356 by Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee; and Senators Hutson, Diaz, Berman, and Perry)

The bill prohibits any licensing department, board, or agency from denying a license, refusing to renew a license, or suspending or revoking a professional license based solely on an individual being delinquent on a payment or defaulting on his or her student loans. The bill also:

- Removes the provision authorizing the Department of Health (DOH) to impose specified penalties on a healthcare practitioner for failure to repay a student loan or comply with the terms of a service scholarship.
- Specifies that the requirement for the DOH, or affiliated licensing boards, to refuse to allow a candidate to sit for an exam, or refuse to grant or renew a license because the applicant is on the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USHHS) Office of Inspector General's *List of Excluded Individuals and Entities* does not apply when the applicant is on the list solely because of default or delinquency on a student loan.
- Repeals the requirement that the DOH obtain a monthly list from the USHHS of the health care practitioners who have defaulted on their student loans, and the resulting requirement to notify a licensee that his or her license will be suspended, pending new payment terms.
- Requires the Department of Education, in its efforts to collect delinquent and defaulted debt, to comply with the protections for an individual's license established in the bill.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2020.

Vote: Senate 35-1; House 118-0