

By Senator Jones

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to public accountancy; amending s.  
3 473.306, F.S.; revising prerequisites for taking the  
4 examination for licensure as a certified public  
5 accountant; eliminating certain obsolete provisions;  
6 amending s. 473.308, F.S.; revising and updating the  
7 requirements for education and work experience; requiring  
8 the Board of Accountancy to adopt rules governing  
9 requirements for work experience; clarifying provisions  
10 that specify what constitutes good moral character for  
11 purposes of qualifying for licensure as a certified public  
12 accountant; revising provisions governing licensure by  
13 endorsement; providing an effective date.

14  
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

16  
17 Section 1. Section 473.306, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
18 read:

19 473.306 Examinations.--

20 (1) A person desiring to be licensed as a Florida certified  
21 public accountant shall apply to the department to take the ~~for~~  
22 licensure examination.

23 (2) An applicant is entitled to take the licensure  
24 examination to practice in this state as a certified public  
25 accountant if the applicant has completed 120 semester hours or  
26 160 quarter hours from an accredited college or university with a  
27 concentration in accounting and business courses as specified by  
28 the board by rule.+

29 ~~(a) Is of good moral character; and~~

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30           ~~(b) Has met the following educational requirements from an~~  
31 ~~accredited college or university:~~

32           ~~1. If application is made prior to August 2, 1983, a~~  
33 ~~baccalaureate degree with a major in accounting or its equivalent~~  
34 ~~with a concentration in accounting and business to the extent~~  
35 ~~specified by the board.~~

36           ~~2. If application is made after August 1, 1983, a~~  
37 ~~baccalaureate degree with a major in accounting or its equivalent~~  
38 ~~plus at least 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in excess of those~~  
39 ~~required for a 4-year baccalaureate degree, with a concentration~~  
40 ~~in accounting and business in the total educational program to~~  
41 ~~the extent specified by the board.~~

42           (3) The board shall have the authority to establish the  
43 standards for determining and shall determine:

44           (a) What constitutes a passing grade for each subject or  
45 part of the licensure examination;

46           (b) Which educational institutions, in addition to the  
47 universities in the State University System of Florida, shall be  
48 deemed to be accredited colleges or universities;

49           (c) What courses and number of hours constitute a major in  
50 accounting; and

51           (d) What courses and number of hours constitute additional  
52 accounting courses acceptable under s. 473.308(3) subparagraph  
53 ~~(2)(b)2.~~

54           ~~(4)(a) "Good moral character" means a personal history of~~  
55 ~~honesty, fairness, and respect for the rights of others and for~~  
56 ~~the laws of this state and nation.~~

57           ~~(b) The board may refuse to certify an applicant for~~  
58 ~~failure to satisfy this requirement if:~~

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59           ~~1. The board finds a reasonable relationship between the~~  
60 ~~lack of good moral character of the applicant and the~~  
61 ~~professional responsibilities of a certified public accountant;~~  
62 ~~and~~

63           ~~2. The finding by the board of lack of good moral character~~  
64 ~~is supported by competent substantial evidence.~~

65           ~~(c) When an applicant is found to be unqualified for a~~  
66 ~~license because of a lack of good moral character, the board~~  
67 ~~shall furnish the applicant a statement containing the findings~~  
68 ~~of the board, a complete record of the evidence upon which the~~  
69 ~~determination was based, and a notice of the rights of the~~  
70 ~~applicant to a rehearing and appeal.~~

71           ~~(4)~~(5) The board may adopt an alternative licensure  
72 examination for persons who have been licensed to practice public  
73 accountancy or its equivalent in a foreign country so long as the  
74 International Qualifications Appraisal Board of the National  
75 Association of State Boards of Accountancy has ratified an  
76 agreement with that country for reciprocal licensure.

77           ~~(5)~~(6) For the purposes of maintaining the proper  
78 educational qualifications for licensure under this chapter, the  
79 board may appoint an Educational Advisory Committee, which shall  
80 be composed of one member of the board, two persons in public  
81 practice who are licensed under this chapter, and four  
82 academicians on faculties of universities in this state.

83           Section 2. Section 473.308, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
84 read:

85           473.308 Licensure.--

86           (1) A person desiring to be licensed as a Florida certified  
87 public accountant in this state shall apply to the department for

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88 licensure and the department shall license any applicant who the  
89 board certifies is qualified to practice public accounting.

90 (2) The board shall certify for licensure any applicant who  
91 successfully passes the licensure examination and satisfies the  
92 requirements of subsections (3), (4), and (5), ~~s. 473.306~~ and  
93 shall certify for licensure any firm that ~~which~~ satisfies the  
94 requirements of ss. 473.309 and 473.3101. The board may refuse to  
95 certify any applicant or firm that has violated any of the  
96 provisions of s. 473.322.

97 (3) An applicant for licensure must have received a  
98 baccalaureate degree with a major in accounting or its equivalent  
99 plus at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours in excess of  
100 those required for a 4-year baccalaureate degree, with a  
101 concentration in accounting and business in the total educational  
102 program to the extent specified by the board.

103 (4) An applicant for licensure after December 31, 2008,  
104 must show that he or she has had 1 year of work experience. This  
105 experience shall include providing any type of service or advice  
106 involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management  
107 advisory, financial advisory, tax, or consulting skills, all of  
108 which must be verified by a certified public accountant who is  
109 licensed by a state or territory of the United States and who has  
110 supervised the applicant. This experience is acceptable if it was  
111 gained through employment in government, industry, academia, or  
112 public practice; constituted a substantial part of the  
113 applicant's duties; and was under the supervision of a certified  
114 public accountant licensed by a state or territory of the United  
115 States. The board shall adopt rules specifying standards and

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116 providing for the review and approval of the work experience  
117 required by this section.

118 (5) An applicant for licensure shall show that the  
119 applicant has good moral character.

120 (6) (a) "Good moral character" means a personal history of  
121 honesty, fairness, and respect for the rights of others and for  
122 the laws of this state and nation.

123 (b) The board may refuse to certify an applicant for  
124 failure to satisfy this requirement if:

125 1. The board finds a reasonable relationship between the  
126 lack of good moral character of the applicant and the  
127 professional responsibilities of a certified public accountant;  
128 and

129 2. The finding by the board of lack of good moral character  
130 is supported by competent substantial evidence.

131 (c) When an applicant is found to be unqualified for a  
132 license because of a lack of good moral character, the board  
133 shall furnish to the applicant a statement containing the  
134 findings of the board, a complete record of the evidence upon  
135 which the determination was based, and a notice of the rights of  
136 the applicant to a rehearing and appeal.

137 (7)~~(3)~~ The board shall certify as qualified for a license  
138 by endorsement an applicant who:

139 (a)1. Is not licensed and has not been licensed in another  
140 state or territory and who has met the requirements of this  
141 section for education, work experience, and good moral character  
142 qualifies to take the examination as set forth in s. 473.306 and  
143 has passed a national, regional, state, or territorial licensing

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144 examination that ~~which~~ is substantially equivalent to the  
145 examination required by s. 473.306; and

146 2. Has completed such continuing education courses as the  
147 board deems appropriate, within the limits for each applicable 2-  
148 year period as set forth in s. 473.312, but at least such courses  
149 as are equivalent to the continuing education requirements for a  
150 Florida certified public account licensed licensee in this state  
151 during the 2 years immediately preceding her or his application  
152 for licensure by endorsement; or

153 (b)1.a. Holds a valid license to practice public accounting  
154 issued by another state or territory of the United States, if the  
155 criteria for issuance of such license were substantially  
156 equivalent to the licensure criteria that ~~which~~ existed in this  
157 state at the time the license was issued; or

158 b. Holds a valid license to practice public accounting  
159 issued by another state or territory of the United States but the  
160 criteria for issuance of such license did not meet the  
161 requirements of sub-subparagraph a.; has met the requirements of  
162 this section for education, work experience, and good moral  
163 character; ~~who qualifies to take the examination as set forth in~~  
164 ~~s. 473.306~~ and has passed a national, regional, state, or  
165 territorial licensing examination that ~~which~~ is substantially  
166 equivalent to the examination required by s. 473.306; and

167 2. Has completed continuing education courses that ~~which~~  
168 are equivalent to the continuing education requirements for a  
169 Florida certified public accountant licensed licensee in this  
170 state during the 2 years immediately preceding her or his  
171 application for licensure by endorsement.

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172        (8)~~(4)~~ If the applicant has at least 5 years of experience  
173 in the practice of public accountancy in the United States or in  
174 the practice of public accountancy or its equivalent in a foreign  
175 country that the International Qualifications Appraisal Board of  
176 the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy has  
177 determined has licensure standards that are substantially  
178 equivalent to those in the United States, or has at least 5 years  
179 of work experience that meets the requirements of subsection (4)  
180 ~~as an auditor or accountant in the employment of a unit of~~  
181 ~~federal, state, or local government and that employment required~~  
182 ~~the use of accounting skills as a substantial part of the~~  
183 ~~applicant's duties and was under the supervision of a certified~~  
184 ~~public accountant licensed by a state or territory of the United~~  
185 ~~States, the board shall waive the requirements of subsection (3)~~  
186 ~~which s. 473.306(2)(b)2. that are in excess of a baccalaureate~~  
187 degree. All experience that is used as a basis for waiving the  
188 requirements of subsection (3) ~~s. 473.306(2)(b)2.~~ must be while  
189 licensed as a certified public accountant by another state or  
190 territory of the United States or while licensed in the practice  
191 of public accountancy or its equivalent in a foreign country that  
192 the International Qualifications Appraisal Board of the National  
193 Association of State Boards of Accountancy has determined has  
194 licensure standards that are substantially equivalent to those in  
195 the United States. The board shall have the authority to  
196 establish the standards for experience that meet this  
197 requirement.

198        (9)~~(5)~~ The board may refuse to certify for licensure any  
199 applicant who is under investigation in another state for any act  
200 that ~~which~~ would constitute a violation of this act or chapter

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201 455, until such time as the investigation is complete and  
202 disciplinary proceedings have been terminated.

203 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.