

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 861

Short Title: Dispensing Opticians.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Lee.

Referred to: Finance.

April 15, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT AMENDING THE DISPENSING OPTICIANS ACT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 90-237 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-237. **Qualifications for dispensing opticians.**

In order to be issued a license as a registered licensed optician by the North Carolina State Board of Opticians, the applicant:

(1) Shall not have violated this Article or the rules of the ~~Board;~~ Board.

(2) Shall be at least 18 years of age and a high school graduate or ~~equivalent;~~ equivalent.

(2a) Shall be of good moral character.

(3) Shall have passed an examination conducted by the Board to determine his or her fitness to engage in the business of a dispensing ~~optician;~~ and optician.

(4) Shall have completed a six-month internship by working full time under the supervision of a licensed optician, ~~optometrist~~ optometrist, or physician trained in ophthalmology, in order to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of measurement of the face, and fitting and adjusting glasses and frames to the face, lens recognition, lens design, and prescription interpretation."

1 Section 2. G.S. 90-241 reads as rewritten:

2 **"§ 90-241. Waiver of written examination requirements.**

3 (a) The Board shall grant a license without examination to any applicant who
4 holds a currently valid license as a dispensing optician issued by another state, is in good
5 standing in such other state, has engaged in practice in such other state as a licensee for
6 four years immediately preceding the application in this State, is at least 18 years of age,
7 and has not violated this Article or the rules of the Board. who:

8 (1) Is at least 18 years of age.

9 (2) Is of good moral character.

10 (3) Holds a license in good standing as a dispensing optician in another
11 state.

12 (4) Has engaged in the practice of opticianry in the other state for four years
13 immediately preceding the application to the Board.

14 (5) Has not violated this Article or the rules of the Board.

15 (b) The Board ~~will~~shall grant admission to the next examination and grant license
16 upon attainment of a passing score on the examination to ~~persons from other states who are~~
17 ~~not licensed but who have worked a person who has worked,~~ in a state that does not license
18 opticians, in opticianry for four years immediately preceding the application to the Board
19 performing tasks and taking the curriculum equivalent to the North Carolina
20 apprenticeship, and who ~~meet~~meets the requirements of G.S. 90-237, subsections (1), (2)
21 ~~and (3).~~G.S. 90-237(1) through (3).

22 (c) Any person desiring to secure a license under this section shall make
23 application therefor in the manner and form prescribed by the rules ~~and regulations~~ of the
24 Board and shall pay the fee prescribed in G.S. 90-246.

25 (d) ~~Upon receipt of the application described in subsection (c) above, the Board~~
26 ~~may issue a temporary license to engage in opticianry in this State. Persons issued a~~
27 ~~temporary license under this subsection may engage in opticianry in this State for not~~
28 ~~more than 60 days while awaiting a final decision on licensure by the Board. The Board~~
29 ~~shall make a final decision on licensure under this subsection not later than 60 days after~~
30 ~~receipt of the initial application. If the Board does not approve licensure under this~~
31 ~~subsection, the applicant, if operating under a temporary license, shall immediately~~
32 ~~surrender it to the Board and cease the practice of opticianry in this State."~~

33 Section 3. G.S. 90-244(b) reads as rewritten:

34 "(b) A license issued by the Board automatically expires on the first day of January
35 of each year. A license ~~may~~shall be reinstated without penalty ~~during the month from~~
36 January 1 through January 15 immediately following expiration. ~~After the end of the month,~~
37 expiration. After January 15, a license mayshall be reinstated by payment of the renewal
38 fee and a penalty of five dollars (\$5.00) per month not to exceed the license fee itself. fifty
39 dollars (\$50.00). Licenses ~~which that~~ remain expired two years or more ~~may~~shall not be
40 reinstated."

41 Section 4. G.S. 90-246 reads as rewritten:

42 **"§ 90-246. Fees.**

1 In order to provide the means of administering and enforcing the provisions of this
 2 Article and the other duties of the North Carolina State Board of Opticians, the Board is
 3 hereby authorized to charge and collect fees established by its rules ~~and regulations~~ not to
 4 exceed the following:

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|----|-----|---|---------------------|-----------------|
| 5 | (1) | Each examination | \$125.00 | <u>\$200.00</u> |
| 6 | (2) | Each initial license | \$25.00 | <u>\$ 50.00</u> |
| 7 | (3) | Each renewal of license | 60.00 | <u>\$100.00</u> |
| 8 | (4) | Each license issued to a practitioner
of another state to practice
in this State | \$100.00 | <u>\$200.00</u> |
| 10 | (5) | Each registration of an optical
place of business | \$25.00 | <u>\$ 50.00</u> |
| 11 | (6) | Each application for registration
as an opticianry apprentice or
intern, and renewals thereof | \$25.00 | |
| 12 | (7) | Temporary license issued pursuant
to G.S. 90-241(d) | _____ | <u>\$25.00.</u> |
| 13 | (8) | Each registration of a training
establishment | \$ 25.00 | |
| 14 | (9) | Each license verification | \$ 10.00. | |

15 Section 5. G.S. 90-249 reads as rewritten:

16 **"§ 90-249. Powers of the Board.**

17 (a) The Board shall have the power to make ~~rules and regulations,~~ rules, not
 18 inconsistent with this Article and the laws of the State of North Carolina, with respect to
 19 the following areas of the business of opticianry in North Carolina:

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|----|------|--|
| 20 | (1) | Misrepresentation to the public; <u>public.</u> |
| 21 | (2) | Baiting or deceptive advertising; <u>advertising.</u> |
| 22 | (3) | Continuing education of licensees; <u>licensees.</u> |
| 23 | (4) | Location of registrants in the State; <u>State.</u> |
| 24 | (5) | Registration of established optical places of business, provided but no
rule restricting type or location of a business may be enacted; <u>enacted.</u> |
| 25 | (6) | Requiring photographs for purposes of identification of persons subject
to this Article; <u>Article.</u> |
| 26 | (7) | Content of licensure examination and reexamination; <u>reexamination.</u> |
| 27 | (8) | Revocation, suspension, and reinstatement of license and reprimands;
<u>licenses, probation, and reprimands of licensees, and other penalties.</u> |
| 28 | (9) | Fees within the limits of G.S. 90-246; <u>G.S. 90-246.</u> |
| 29 | (10) | Accreditation of schools of opticianry; <u>opticianry.</u> |
| 30 | (11) | Registration and training of apprentices and interns; <u>interns.</u> |
| 31 | (12) | License without examination and issuance of temporary license.
<u>Licenses and examinations pursuant to G.S. 90-241.</u> |

32 (a1) Except as provided in this Article, the Board shall not prohibit or restrict
 33 advertising by licensees.

1 (b) ~~The Board shall have the power to revoke, suspend or issue a reprimand with~~
2 ~~regard to any license granted by it under this Article for misconduct, gross negligence,~~
3 ~~incompetence, or violation of this Article or the rules of the Board promulgated~~
4 ~~hereunder. It shall be grounds for revocation of a license to advertise in any manner~~
5 ~~which conveys or intends to convey the impression to the public that the eyes are~~
6 ~~examined by persons licensed under this Article. Other than as expressly provided in this~~
7 ~~Article, the Board shall neither adopt nor enforce any rule, regulation or policy which~~
8 ~~prohibits advertising.~~

9 (c) ~~Any person whose license has been revoked for any cause may, after the~~
10 ~~expiration of 90 days, and within two years from the date of revocation, apply to the~~
11 ~~Board to have the same reinstated, and upon a showing satisfactory to the Board, the~~
12 ~~license may be restored to such person.~~

13 (d) ~~The procedure for revocation and suspension of a license or refusal to grant~~
14 ~~license or permission to sit for the examination shall be in accordance with the provisions~~
15 ~~of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes."~~

16 Section 6. Article 17 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by
17 adding a new section to read:

18 **"§ 90-249.1. Disciplinary actions.**

19 (a) The Board may suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue, renew, or reinstate any
20 license for any of the following:

- 21 (1) Offering to practice or practicing as a dispensing optician without a
22 license.
- 23 (2) Aiding or abetting an unlicensed person in offering to practice or
24 practicing as a dispensing optician.
- 25 (3) Selling, transferring, or assigning a license.
- 26 (4) Engaging in fraud or misrepresentation to obtain or renew a license.
- 27 (5) Engaging in false or misleading advertising.
- 28 (6) Advertising in any manner that conveys or intends to convey the
29 impression that eyes are examined by persons licensed under this
30 Article.
- 31 (7) Engaging in malpractice, unethical conduct, fraud, deceit, gross
32 negligence, incompetence, or gross misconduct.
- 33 (8) Being convicted of a crime involving fraud or moral turpitude.
- 34 (9) Violating any provision of this Article or the rules adopted by the
35 Board.

36 (b) In addition or as an alternative to taking any of the actions permitted in
37 subsection (a) of this section, the Board may assess a licensee a civil penalty of not more
38 than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the violation of any section of this Article. In any
39 case in which the Board is authorized to take any of the actions permitted in subsection
40 (a) of this section, the Board may instead accept an offer in compromise of the charges
41 whereby the accused licensee shall pay to the Board a civil penalty of not more than one
42 thousand dollars (\$1,000). All civil penalties collected by the Board shall be remitted to
43 the school fund of the county in which the violation occurred.

1 (c) In determining the amount of a civil penalty, the Board may consider:

2 (1) The degree and extent of harm caused by the violation to public health
3 and safety or the potential for harm.

4 (2) The duration and gravity of the violation.

5 (3) Whether the violation was willful or reflects a continuing pattern.

6 (4) Whether the violation involved elements of fraud or deception.

7 (5) Prior disciplinary actions against the licensee.

8 (6) Whether and to what extent the licensee profited from the violation.

9 (d) Any person, including the Board and its staff, may file a complaint with the
10 Board alleging that a licensee committed acts in violation of subsection (a) of this
11 section. The Board may, without holding a hearing, dismiss the complaint as unfounded
12 or trivial. Any hearings held pursuant to this section shall be conducted in accordance
13 with Chapter 150B of the General Statutes."

14 Section 7. This act is effective when it becomes law.