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HOUSE BILL NO. 2431

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 8, 2025

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 54.1-3926 of the Code of Virginia, relating to attorneys; preliminary proof of education required of applicant for Virginia Bar examination; graduates of foreign universities; emergency.*

Patron—Callsen

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 54.1-3926 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-3926. Preliminary proof of education required of applicant.

Before an applicant will be permitted to take any examination under this article, the applicant shall furnish to the Board satisfactory evidence that he has:

1. Satisfactorily completed legal studies amounting to at least five semesters, or the equivalent of at least five semesters on a system other than a semester system, of full-time study at a law school approved by the American Bar Association or the Board;

2. Received a bachelor's degree *or higher* from *either (i) an accredited baccalaureate institution of higher education accredited by an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or (ii) a foreign university as verified by an academic credential evaluation service* and, *in either case, also* studied law for three years, consisting of not less than 18 hours per week for at least 40 weeks per year, in the office of an attorney practicing in the Commonwealth, whose full time is devoted to the practice of law;

3. Studied law for at least three years partly in a law school approved by the American Bar Association or the Board and partly, for not less than 18 hours per week for at least 40 weeks per year, in the office of an attorney practicing in the Commonwealth whose full time is devoted to the practice of law;

4. Received a bachelor's degree *or higher* from *either (i) an accredited baccalaureate institution of higher education accredited by an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or (ii) a foreign university as verified by an academic credential evaluation service* and, *in either case, also* studied law for three years, consisting of not less than 18 hours per week for at least 40 weeks per year, with a retired circuit court judge who served the Commonwealth as a circuit court judge for a minimum of 10 years and who at the time of commencement of the three-year study period was retired for not more than five years; or

5. Completed all degree requirements from a law school not approved by the American Bar Association, including a foreign law school, obtained an LL.M. from a law school approved by the American Bar Association, and been admitted to practice law before the court of last resort in any state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia.

The attorney in whose office or the judge with whom the applicant intends to study shall be approved by the Board, which shall prescribe reasonable conditions as to the course of study.

Upon request by the Board, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall provide to the Board a list of academic credential evaluation services that may be used for the verification of foreign universities required by clause (ii) of subdivisions 2 and 4.

2. That an emergency exists and this act is in force from its passage.

INTRODUCED

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