

# FACT CHECK:

## The Myths of Anti-licensing

Time and again, calls for anti-licensing return to a handful of myths and purported problems that can only be solved by drastically weakening or outright eliminating licensing.

Let's take a closer look at those myths and set the record straight.

**MYTH #1:** Education requirements to obtain licenses are too onerous and arbitrary.

**FACT:** Some occupations are rightly calling for a careful review and recalibration of the education requirements to become licensed. This is what should be done. It is not, however, what anti-licensers are calling for. What anti-licensing seeks to do is broadly and arbitrarily lower education standards for all professions. Some proposals go so far as to disallow minimum education requirements for highly complex, technical professions that impact public safety and welfare.

**MYTH #2:** Licensing creates an undue burden for spouses of military personnel who have to contend with red tape and new costs every time they move.

**FACT:** Well-designed professional licensing systems already include interstate practice and mobility and provisions for military spouses. The real threat comes from “universal licensing” proposals that would dilute existing mobility systems that have been working well for military personnel and the public for decades. What's more, some of these proposals impose arbitrary residency requirements that create new barriers to practicing that would otherwise not exist. Most importantly, “universal licensing” will create a race to the bottom, hurt the public's welfare, and create business insurance and liability implications.

**MYTH #3:** Licensing creates barriers to employment for women, minorities, and the socio-economically disadvantaged.

**FACT:** Licensing helps level the playing field for women and minorities. A 2021 study by Oxford Economics finds that licensing narrows the gender-driven wage gap by about a third and the race-driven wage gap by about half. In any industry, responsible licensing systems create well-defined career paths for workers—regardless of gender or ethnicity—and opportunities to achieve higher earnings.

**MYTH #4:** Licensing is anti-competitive.

**FACT:** Licensing is pro-consumer and pro-competition because it enables consumers to choose from a pool of qualified licensed professionals. These qualifications are verified upfront by independent licensing boards composed of experts in a given professional field. Licensing also helps level the playing field for women and minorities, increasing fairness, competition, and merit-based career opportunities.

**MYTH #5:** Licensing infringes on Americans' fundamental right to earn a living.

**FACT:** Licensing is a proven path that helps people compete, succeed, and earn more for themselves and their families. It is a false argument to say we must eliminate pathways to success and recognition of hard work in order for others to succeed.

**MYTH #6:** Reform is only necessary to address professions that are over-regulated.

**FACT:** Anti-licensing is not interested in finding targeted solutions to specific problems. What anti-licensing seeks to do is eliminate licensing at large with no concern for public safety ramifications. Anti-licensors make no distinction between occupations with important licensing-related challenges and professions that already have responsible licensing systems that serve professionals and the public well.

**MYTH #7:** Licensing requirements should be scaled back or eliminated unless it can be proven that removing them would endanger the public.

**FACT:** Anti-licensors care more about free-market ideology than about the health, safety, and welfare of the public. They are willing to allow people to be harmed before acting to ensure basic, minimum qualifications – even for professionals with high public impact. The stakes are simply too high to broadly and arbitrarily weaken licensing standards and oversight and hope that nothing bad will happen. Professional licensing is rigorous for a reason and recent opinion research shows the overwhelming majority of consumers want it kept that way.

**MYTH #8:** Eliminating licensing is good for employers and American businesses.

**FACT:** Businesses need employees. They also need those employees to be qualified. Licensing is an effective way for businesses to know if their employees meet a minimum standard of qualification. Eliminating licensing would create greater risk and liability for employers that suddenly have no way to assess and verify if their employees are qualified. Without the assurance provided by licensing, businesses would be left on their own to determine minimum qualifications for competent practice and would be at greater risk of litigation and a host of other problems stemming from the work of unqualified employees.

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