

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

LOUISIANA PUBLIC OPINION OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING – APRIL 2022

INTRODUCTION

In March 2022, legislation was filed in Louisiana to significantly weaken licensing standards for professionals working in the state. Proponents of this legislation vastly *overestimate* the effect anti-licensing would have on jobs and the economy and dangerously *underestimate* the effect it would have on consumers and the public at large.

What has been completely lost in this anti-licensing effort and others like it across the country is the perspective of the public, who relies on the work of qualified licensed professionals to keep them safe. To better understand the public’s attitudes toward professional licensing – and proposed efforts to weaken it – ARPL commissioned an independent survey of 600 Louisiana voters.

KEY FINDING 1: LOUISIANA PUBLIC OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

A vast majority of Louisiana voters support strong professional licensing requirements, *especially* for complex, highly technical professions that have a direct impact on public health, safety, and welfare. These beliefs are consistent across voters of all ages, ethnicities, and political parties.

- **91%** of Louisiana voters believe it is important that licensing systems keep consumers and the public safe by establishing standards for professions that impact public health and safety.
- **91%** of Louisiana voters believe it is important that licensing systems ensure that competent, qualified professionals are servicing the public.
- **90%** of Louisiana voters say licensing is important to them because it helps consumers identify qualified professionals and access information about the professionals they hire.

KEY FINDING 2: LOUISIANA PUBLIC DEEPLY CONCERNED BY ANTI-LICENSING LEGISLATION

A clear majority of Louisiana voters have deep concerns about current legislative proposals to weaken or outright eliminate professional licensing. – including proposals currently in the state legislature. These concerns are consistent across voters of all political parties.

- **89%** of Louisiana voters would be “concerned” if Louisiana eliminated minimum qualifications for engineers, architects, landscape architects, surveyors, and CPAs – including **77%** of the public who would be “very concerned” if such legislation passed.
- **Two-thirds of voters** (65 percent) oppose legislation filed in Louisiana that would eliminate professional licensing requirements – and the public assurances they provide – and would mandate that licensing can only be required *after* a public harm has occurred in Louisiana.

- **A majority of voters** (54 percent) say it is a “bad idea” to encourage individuals to file lawsuits if they believe there are too many requirements to practice an occupation or profession, which is exactly what the proposed legislation would do.

KEY FINDING 3: LOUISIANA PUBLIC DOUBTS ANTI-LICENSING BILLS WILL BENEFIT BUSINESSES

Anti-licensors contend that deregulating professional licensing will strengthen the business community through increased employment and market competition. Louisiana voters are skeptical of that premise, and wary of the downstream impacts of anti-licensing on consumers.

- **A majority of voters** (55 percent) believe that eliminating licensing would make it harder for Louisiana businesses to know if their employees are qualified, putting them at greater risk and liability for bad work performed by unqualified employees.
- **Two-thirds of voters** (64 percent) believe that eliminating minimum qualifications assured through licensing would put consumers at greater risk of harm from unqualified practitioners in Louisiana.

Advantage, Inc. surveyed 600 Louisiana voters from March 23 to March 28, 2022.

For more information, visit responsiblelicensing.org, or contact the Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing: info@responsiblelicensing.org