



98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2013 and 2014

HB1545

by Rep. Maria Antonia Berrios

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

215 ILCS 155/16
215 ILCS 155/21

from Ch. 73, par. 1416
from Ch. 73, par. 1421

Amends the Title Insurance Act. Excludes limited liability companies from the requirement that every title insurance agent registration applicant must be 18 years or more of age. Provides that included in every application for registration of a title insurance agent, including a firm, partnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation, shall be an affidavit of the applicant title insurance agent, signed and notarized in front of a notary public, affirming that the applicant and every owner, officer, director, principal, member, or manager of the applicant has never been convicted or pled guilty to any felony or misdemeanor involving a crime of theft or dishonesty. Provides that no person who has had a conviction or pled guilty to any felony or misdemeanor involving theft or dishonesty may be registered by a title insurance company, and no such person may serve as an owner, officer, director, principal, or manager of any registered title insurance agent. Includes additional factors whereby the Secretary of Financial and Professional Regulation may refuse to grant or may suspend or revoke any certificate of authority, registration, or license issued pursuant to the Act or impose a fine for a violation of the Act. Effective January 1, 2014.

LRB098 04054 RPM 34075 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning insurance.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Title Insurance Act is amended by changing
5 Sections 16 and 21 as follows:

6 (215 ILCS 155/16) (from Ch. 73, par. 1416)

7 Sec. 16. Title insurance agents.

8 (a) No person, firm, partnership, association, corporation
9 or other legal entity shall act as or hold itself out to be a
10 title insurance agent unless duly registered by a title
11 insurance company with the Secretary.

12 (b) Each application for registration shall be made on a
13 form specified by the Secretary and prepared in duplicate by
14 each title insurance company which the agent represents. The
15 title insurance company shall retain the copy of the
16 application and forward the original to the Secretary with the
17 appropriate fee.

18 (c) Every applicant for registration, except a firm,
19 partnership, association, limited liability company, or
20 corporation, must be 18 years or more of age. Included in every
21 application for registration of a title insurance agent,
22 including a firm, partnership, association, limited liability
23 company, or corporation, shall be an affidavit of the applicant

1 title insurance agent, signed and notarized in front of a
2 notary public, affirming that the applicant and every owner,
3 officer, director, principal, member, or manager of the
4 applicant has never been convicted or pled guilty to any felony
5 or misdemeanor involving a crime of theft or dishonesty. No
6 person who has had a conviction or pled guilty to any felony or
7 misdemeanor involving theft or dishonesty may be registered by
8 a title insurance company, and no such person may serve as an
9 owner, officer, director, principal, or manager of any
10 registered title insurance agent.

11 (d) Registration shall be made annually by a filing with
12 the Secretary; supplemental registrations for new title
13 insurance agents to be added between annual filings shall be
14 made from time to time in the manner provided by the Secretary;
15 registrations shall remain in effect unless revoked or
16 suspended by the Secretary or voluntarily withdrawn by the
17 registrant or the title insurance company.

18 (e) Funds deposited in connection with any escrows,
19 settlements, or closings shall be deposited in a separate
20 fiduciary trust account or accounts in a bank or other
21 financial institution insured by an agency of the federal
22 government unless the instructions provide otherwise. The
23 funds shall be the property of the person or persons entitled
24 thereto under the provisions of the escrow, settlement, or
25 closing and shall be segregated by escrow, settlement, or
26 closing in the records of the escrow agent. The funds shall not

1 be subject to any debts of the escrowee and shall be used only
2 in accordance with the terms of the individual escrow,
3 settlement, or closing under which the funds were accepted.

4 Interest received on funds deposited with the escrow agent
5 in connection with any escrow, settlement, or closing shall be
6 paid to the depositing party unless the instructions provide
7 otherwise.

8 The escrow agent shall maintain separate records of all
9 receipts and disbursements of escrow, settlement, or closing
10 funds.

11 The escrow agent shall comply with any rules adopted by the
12 Secretary pertaining to escrow, settlement, or closing
13 transactions.

14 (f) A title insurance agent shall not act as an escrow
15 agent in a nonresidential real property transaction where the
16 amount of settlement funds on deposit with the escrow agent is
17 less than \$2,000,000 or in a residential real property
18 transaction unless the title insurance agent, title insurance
19 company, or another authorized title insurance agent has
20 committed for the issuance of title insurance in that
21 transaction and the title insurance agent is authorized to act
22 as an escrow agent on behalf of the title insurance company for
23 which the commitment for title insurance has been issued. The
24 authorization under the preceding sentence shall be given
25 either (1) by an agency contract with the title insurance
26 company which contract, in compliance with the requirements set

1 forth in subsection (g) of this Section, authorizes the title
2 insurance agent to act as an escrow agent on behalf of the
3 title insurance company or (2) by a closing protection letter
4 in compliance with the requirements set forth in Section 16.1
5 of this Act, issued by the title insurance company to the
6 seller, buyer, borrower, and lender. A closing protection
7 letter shall not be issued by a title insurance agent. The
8 provisions of this subsection (f) shall not apply to the
9 authority of a title insurance agent to act as an escrow agent
10 under subsection (g) of Section 17 of this Act.

11 (g) If an agency contract between the title insurance
12 company and the title insurance agent is the source of the
13 authority under subsection (f) of this Section for a title
14 insurance agent to act as escrow agent for a real property
15 transaction, then the agency contract shall provide for no less
16 protection from the title insurance company to all parties to
17 the real property transaction than the title insurance company
18 would have provided to those parties had the title insurance
19 company issued a closing protection letter in conformity with
20 Section 16.1 of this Act.

21 (h) A title insurance company shall be liable for the acts
22 or omissions of its title insurance agent as an escrow agent if
23 the title insurance company has authorized the title insurance
24 agent under subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16 and only
25 to the extent of the liability undertaken by the title
26 insurance company in the agency agreement or closing protection

1 letter. The liability, if any, of the title insurance agent to
2 the title insurance company for acts and omissions of the title
3 insurance agent as an escrow agent shall not be limited or
4 otherwise modified because the title insurance company has
5 provided closing protection to a party or parties to a real
6 property transaction escrow, settlement, or closing. The
7 escrow agent shall not charge a fee for protection provided by
8 a title insurance company to parties to real property
9 transactions under subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16
10 and Section 16.1, but shall collect from the parties the fee
11 charged by the title insurance company and shall promptly remit
12 the fee to the title insurance company. The title insurance
13 company may charge the parties a reasonable fee for protection
14 provided pursuant to subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16
15 and Section 16.1 and shall not pay any portion of the fee to
16 the escrow agent. The payment of any portion of the fee to the
17 escrow agent by the title insurance company, shall be deemed a
18 prohibited inducement or compensation in violation of Section
19 24 of this Act.

20 (i) The Secretary shall adopt and amend such rules as may
21 be required for the proper administration and enforcement of
22 this Section 16 consistent with the federal Real Estate
23 Settlement Procedures Act and Section 24 of this Act.

24 (Source: P.A. 96-1454, eff. 1-1-11.)

25 (215 ILCS 155/21) (from Ch. 73, par. 1421)

1 Sec. 21. Regulatory action.

2 (a) The Secretary may refuse to grant, and may suspend or
3 revoke, any certificate of authority, registration, or license
4 issued pursuant to this Act or may impose a fine for a
5 violation of this Act if he determines that the holder of or
6 applicant for such certificate, registration or license:

7 (1) has intentionally made a material misstatement or
8 fraudulent misrepresentation in relation to a matter
9 covered by this Act;

10 (2) has misappropriated or tortiously converted to its
11 own use, or illegally withheld, monies held in a fiduciary
12 capacity;

13 (3) has demonstrated untrustworthiness or incompetency
14 in transacting the business of guaranteeing titles to real
15 estate in such a manner as to endanger the public;

16 (4) has materially misrepresented the terms or
17 conditions of contracts or agreements to which it is a
18 party;

19 (5) has paid any commissions, discounts or any part of
20 its premiums, fees or other charges to any person in
21 violation of any State or federal law or regulations or
22 opinion letters issued under the federal Real Estate
23 Settlement Procedures Act of 1974; ~~or~~

24 (6) has failed to comply with the deposit and reserve
25 requirements of this Act or any other requirements of this
26 Act;~~;~~

1 (7) has committed fraud or misrepresentation in
2 applying for or procuring any certificate of authority,
3 registration, or license issued pursuant to this Act;

4 (8) has a conviction or plea of guilty or plea of nolo
5 contendere in this State or any other jurisdiction to (i)
6 any felony or (ii) a misdemeanor, an essential element of
7 which is dishonesty or fraud or larceny, embezzlement, or
8 obtaining money, property, or credit by false pretenses or
9 by means of a confidence game;

10 (9) has been disciplined by another state, the District
11 of Columbia, a territory, foreign nation, a governmental
12 agency, or any entity authorized to impose discipline if at
13 least one of the grounds for that discipline is the same as
14 or equivalent to one of the grounds for which a title
15 insurance company, title insurance agent, or independent
16 escrowee may be disciplined under this Act or if at least
17 one of the grounds for that discipline involves dishonesty;
18 a certified copy of the record of the action by the other
19 state or jurisdiction shall be prima facie evidence
20 thereof;

21 (10) has advertising that is inaccurate, misleading,
22 or contrary to the provisions of this Act;

23 (11) has knowingly and willfully made any substantial
24 misrepresentation or untruthful advertising;

25 (12) has made any false promises of a character likely
26 to influence, persuade, or induce;

1 (13) has knowingly failed to account for or remit any
2 money or documents coming into the possession of a title
3 insurance company, title insurance agent, or independent
4 escrowee that belong to others;

5 (14) has engaged in dishonorable, unethical, or
6 unprofessional conduct of a character likely to deceive,
7 defraud, or harm the public;

8 (15) has violated the terms of a disciplinary order
9 issued by the Department;

10 (16) has disregarded or violated any provision of this
11 Act or the published rules adopted by the Department to
12 enforce this Act or has aided or abetted any individual,
13 partnership, registered limited liability partnership,
14 limited liability company, or corporation in disregarding
15 any provision of this Act or the published rules; or

16 (17) has acted as a title insurance company, title
17 insurance agent, or independent escrowee without a
18 certificate of authority, registration, or license after
19 the title insurance company, title insurance agent, or
20 independent escrowee's certificate of authority,
21 registration, or license was inoperative.

22 (b) In every case where a registration or certificate is
23 suspended or revoked, or an application for a registration or
24 certificate or renewal thereof is refused, the Secretary shall
25 serve notice of his action, including a statement of the
26 reasons for his action, as provided by this Act. When a notice

1 of suspension or revocation of a certificate of authority is
2 given to a title insurance company, the Secretary shall also
3 notify all the registered agents of that title insurance
4 company of the Secretary's action.

5 (c) In the case of a refusal to issue or renew a
6 certificate or accept a registration, the applicant or
7 registrant may request in writing, within 30 days after the
8 date of service, a hearing. In the case of a refusal to renew,
9 the expiring registration or certificate shall be deemed to
10 continue in force until 30 days after the service of the notice
11 of refusal to renew, or if a hearing is requested during that
12 period, until a final order is entered pursuant to such
13 hearing.

14 (d) The suspension or revocation of a registration or
15 certificate shall take effect upon service of notice thereof.
16 The holder of any such suspended registration or certificate
17 may request in writing, within 30 days of such service, a
18 hearing.

19 (e) In cases of suspension or revocation of registration
20 pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary may, in the public
21 interest, issue an order of suspension or revocation which
22 shall take effect upon service of notification thereof. Such
23 order shall become final 60 days from the date of service
24 unless the registrant requests in writing, within such 60 days,
25 a formal hearing thereon. In the event a hearing is requested,
26 the order shall remain temporary until a final order is entered

1 pursuant to such hearing.

2 (f) Hearing shall be held at such time and place as may be
3 designated by the Secretary either in the City of Springfield,
4 the City of Chicago, or in the county in which the principal
5 business office of the affected registrant or certificate
6 holder is located.

7 (g) The suspension or revocation of a registration or
8 certificate or the refusal to issue or renew a registration or
9 certificate shall not in any way limit or terminate the
10 responsibilities of any registrant or certificate holder
11 arising under any policy or contract of title insurance to
12 which it is a party. No new contract or policy of title
13 insurance may be issued, nor may any existing policy or
14 contract to title insurance be renewed by any registrant or
15 certificate holder during any period of suspension or
16 revocation of a registration or certificate.

17 (h) The Secretary may issue a cease and desist order to a
18 title insurance company, agent, or other entity doing business
19 without the required license or registration, when in the
20 opinion of the Secretary, the company, agent, or other entity
21 is violating or is about to violate any provision of this Act
22 or any law or of any rule or condition imposed in writing by
23 the Department.

24 The Secretary may issue the cease and desist order without
25 notice and before a hearing.

26 The Secretary shall have the authority to prescribe rules

1 for the administration of this Section.

2 If it is determined that the Secretary had the authority to
3 issue the cease and desist order, he may issue such orders as
4 may be reasonably necessary to correct, eliminate or remedy
5 such conduct.

6 Any person or company subject to an order pursuant to this
7 Section is entitled to judicial review of the order in
8 accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Review
9 Law.

10 The powers vested in the Secretary by this Section are
11 additional to any and all other powers and remedies vested in
12 the Secretary by law, and nothing in this Section shall be
13 construed as requiring that the Secretary shall employ the
14 powers conferred in this Section instead of or as a condition
15 precedent to the exercise of any other power or remedy vested
16 in the Secretary.

17 (Source: P.A. 94-893, eff. 6-20-06.)

18 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
19 1, 2014.