

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 without a separate written
9 notification to the Secretary disclosing the conviction or
10 plea, and no such person may serve as an owner, officer,
11 director, principal, or manager of any registered title
12 insurance agent without the written permission of the
13 Secretary.

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19 suspended by the Secretary or voluntarily withdrawn by the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

21 (e) Funds deposited in connection with any escrows,
22 settlements, or closings shall be deposited in a separate
23 fiduciary trust account or accounts in a bank or other
24 financial institution insured by an agency of the federal
25 government unless the instructions provide otherwise. The
26 funds shall be the property of the person or persons entitled

1 thereto under the provisions of the escrow, settlement, or
2 closing and shall be segregated by escrow, settlement, or
3 closing in the records of the escrow agent. The funds shall not
4 be subject to any debts of the escrowee and shall be used only
5 in accordance with the terms of the individual escrow,
6 settlement, or closing under which the funds were accepted.

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

11 The escrow agent shall maintain separate records of all
12 receipts and disbursements of escrow, settlement, or closing
13 funds.

14 The escrow agent shall comply with any rules adopted by the
15 Secretary pertaining to escrow, settlement, or closing
16 transactions.

17 (f) A title insurance agent shall not act as an escrow
18 agent in a nonresidential real property transaction where the
19 amount of settlement funds on deposit with the escrow agent is
20 less than \$2,000,000 or in a residential real property
21 transaction unless the title insurance agent, title insurance
22 company, or another authorized title insurance agent has
23 committed for the issuance of title insurance in that
24 transaction and the title insurance agent is authorized to act
25 as an escrow agent on behalf of the title insurance company for
26 which the commitment for title insurance has been issued. The

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

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

24 (h) A title insurance company shall be liable for the acts
25 or omissions of its title insurance agent as an escrow agent if
26 the title insurance company has authorized the title insurance

1 agent under subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16 and only
2 to the extent of the liability undertaken by the title
3 insurance company in the agency agreement or closing protection
4 letter. The liability, if any, of the title insurance agent to
5 the title insurance company for acts and omissions of the title
6 insurance agent as an escrow agent shall not be limited or
7 otherwise modified because the title insurance company has
8 provided closing protection to a party or parties to a real
9 property transaction escrow, settlement, or closing. The
10 escrow agent shall not charge a fee for protection provided by
11 a title insurance company to parties to real property
12 transactions under subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16
13 and Section 16.1, but shall collect from the parties the fee
14 charged by the title insurance company and shall promptly remit
15 the fee to the title insurance company. The title insurance
16 company may charge the parties a reasonable fee for protection
17 provided pursuant to subsections (f) and (g) of this Section 16
18 and Section 16.1 and shall not pay any portion of the fee to
19 the escrow agent. The payment of any portion of the fee to the
20 escrow agent by the title insurance company, shall be deemed a
21 prohibited inducement or compensation in violation of Section
22 24 of this Act.

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

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

2 (215 ILCS 155/21) (from Ch. 73, par. 1421)

3 Sec. 21. Regulatory action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (6) has failed to comply with the deposit and reserve
2 requirements of this Act or any other requirements of this
3 Act;~~;~~

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

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

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

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

26 (11) has knowingly and willfully made any substantial

1 misrepresentation or untruthful advertising;

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

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

8 (14) has engaged in dishonorable, unethical, or
9 unprofessional conduct of a character likely to deceive,
10 defraud, or harm the public;

11 (15) has violated the terms of a disciplinary order
12 issued by the Department;

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

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

25 (b) In every case where a registration or certificate is
26 suspended or revoked, or an application for a registration or

1 certificate or renewal thereof is refused, the Secretary shall
2 serve notice of his action, including a statement of the
3 reasons for his action, as provided by this Act. When a notice
4 of suspension or revocation of a certificate of authority is
5 given to a title insurance company, the Secretary shall also
6 notify all the registered agents of that title insurance
7 company of the Secretary's action.

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

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

22 (e) In cases of suspension or revocation of registration
23 pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary may, in the public
24 interest, issue an order of suspension or revocation which
25 shall take effect upon service of notification thereof. Such
26 order shall become final 60 days from the date of service

1 unless the registrant requests in writing, within such 60 days,
2 a formal hearing thereon. In the event a hearing is requested,
3 the order shall remain temporary until a final order is entered
4 pursuant to such hearing.

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

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

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

1 The Secretary may issue the cease and desist order without
2 notice and before a hearing.

3 The Secretary shall have the authority to prescribe rules
4 for the administration of this Section.

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

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

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

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

21 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
22 1, 2014.