

**HB 354** by Rep. Falconer addresses an outdated loophole in our state's architecture licensing law that allows civil engineers to practice architecture without being regulated by any licensing board. Architects and engineers regularly work very closely together, however, it has come to our attention that due to a gray area in the law, certain engineers are increasingly performing work that falls under the scope of practice of architecture.

Based on our research, **Louisiana is the only state in the country that allows civil engineers to practice architecture.** To be clear: Louisiana and most other jurisdictions do allow for practice that is incidental to architecture or engineering.

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## **Background**

The Architects Registration Exam tests whether applicants for architectural licenses possess the significant knowledge, skills and abilities to provide professional services connected to the design of buildings which have human occupancy or habitation as their principal purpose, while protecting the health, safety and welfare of the general public. Although not educated, tested, or licensed as architects, the outdated La. R.S. 37:155 grants civil engineers the ability to practice architecture in Louisiana.

**La. R.S. 37:155 was originally enacted in the late 1940's when Tulane and LSU offered architectural-engineering degrees.** Those programs included educational components for both architecture and engineering. **There are now four schools offering accredited degree programs in architecture in Louisiana.** Tulane's School of Architecture was accredited in 1953 and LSU's School of Architecture was accredited in 1962, eliminating the architectural-engineering degrees and therefore, the necessity for the exemptions to civil engineers in the architectural statutes. **The statute has never been updated to reflect this change.** This is considered a restraint of trade, taking work away from architects and more importantly jeopardizing the health, safety and welfare of the public as civil engineers are not trained in all aspects of building design as architects are.

In 2018, **30% of buildings designed by professionals were designed by engineers**, including schools, churches and other assembly occupancies. **Engineers are only required to earn 4 hours of Life Safety Code, building codes or ADA guidelines annually if they design building systems, while architects are required to obtain 12 hours annually of health, safety and welfare continuing education units.**

The Louisiana Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board (LAPELS) issues only a "Professional Engineer" license to engineers and provides a listing by the disciplines of engineering approved by the National Council on Examiners of Engineering and Surveying to signify the area in which an engineer is competent. A 2011 AG Opinion directs that an engineer does not have to be listed in a particular discipline in order to practice that discipline. **This determination effectively expands the exemption in R.S. 37:155 for civil engineers to all engineers.**

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