

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 653

(Senator Kagan)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Economic Matters

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**State Board of Architects - Grounds for Discipline and Anonymous Complaints**

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This bill requires (rather than authorizes) the State Board of Architects to deny or suspend a license or reprimand a licensee under specified circumstances. The bill also expands the circumstances under which the board may deny, reprimand, or suspend a license or permit to include situations in which an applicant or licensee misrepresents that the individual holds a license or a permit. The board must notify each county code official if a license is suspended or revoked and also requires a code official that reviews architectural documents for compliance with a local building code to verify a licensee’s credentials before a permit is processed. The bill also authorizes the board to establish an electronic portal to allow the anonymous and confidential reporting of a suspected violation of certain provisions of the Maryland Architects Act (*i.e.*, practicing without a license; providing services without a permit; misrepresentation as an authorized practitioner; and misrepresentation that a business may provide services).

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The State Board of Architects can likely implement the bill’s requirements with existing resources. Special fund expenditures may increase minimally if the board elects to establish the optional portal, but any such expenditures are discretionary. Revenues are not materially affected.

**Local Effect:** Local code officials can complete the credential verification process with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Analysis

### Current Law:

#### *State Board of Architects*

The State Board of Architects qualifies and licenses individuals seeking architectural licensure. The board also issues permits to businesses practicing architecture. In addition, the board investigates complaints against licensees as well as complaints related to the unlicensed practice of architecture services.

#### *Enforcement Actions*

Subject to the hearing provisions under Section 3-313 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article, the board, on the affirmative vote of a majority of its authorized membership, *may* deny a license to any applicant, reprimand any licensee, or suspend or revoke a license if:

- the applicant or licensee fraudulently or deceptively obtains or renews (or attempts to obtain or renew) a license or permit for the applicant or licensee or for another;
- the applicant or licensee fraudulently or deceptively uses a license (*the bill* expands this provision to include misrepresenting that the individual holds a license or a permit);
- the applicant or licensee is guilty of any fraud, gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct while practicing architecture;
- the applicant or licensee violates any regulation adopted by the board;
- the applicant or licensee violates any provision of the Maryland Architects Act (*i.e.*, Title 3 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article);
- the applicant or licensee aids or abets an unauthorized person to practice architecture;
- under the laws of the United States or of any state, the applicant or licensee is convicted of a felony or a relevant misdemeanor; or
- the applicant or licensee has had a license to practice architecture in another state revoked or suspended for grounds that would justify revocation or suspension of a license under Maryland law (excluding failure to pay a license fee).

*Under the bill*, the board *must* deny a license to any applicant, reprimand any licensee, or suspend or a revoke a license under any of the above circumstances (and if the applicant or licensee misrepresents that the individual holds a license or permit).

*Maintenance of List of Licensees and Notifications to Code Officials*

A “code official” is a public official responsible for the review of building permit documents or the issuance of building permits.

Among other requirements, the board must (1) keep a list of the names and mailing addresses of all licensees; (2) provide each code official with a copy of the list annually; and (3) provide any other person who makes a request with a copy of the list at a reasonable fee set by the board.

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**Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1180 (Delegate Qi) - Economic Matters.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Harford, Montgomery, and Wicomico counties; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 24, 2026  
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