



South Carolina H.3288: Bill Summary

H. 3288, [introduced](#) on January 10, 2023 by South Carolina state Rep. Neal Collins (R-District 5) with 23 bipartisan colleagues, aims to expand access to occupational and professional licenses for the state's immigrants. This bill amends the South Carolina Code of Laws to make immigrants with valid employment authorization eligible for licensure. Eligible immigrants [would include](#) Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, parolees, and asylum seekers, since they are able to obtain employment authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), provided they meet stringent requirements.

In South Carolina, approximately 17 percent of jobs require a [professional license](#) and, in 2022, 60 of 102 lower-income occupations required [occupational licenses](#). This bill would enable immigrants with valid work authorization to acquire the necessary licensure for jobs across the income spectrum and to make a substantial contribution to the state's economy.

What would H. 3288 do?

Under this bill, authorizing licensing bodies in South Carolina can issue occupational or professional licenses to eligible immigrants. The bill would amend [Article 1, Chapter 1, Title 40 of the South Carolina Code](#) by:

- Allowing licensing bodies to issue occupational or professional licenses to non-citizens with valid employment authorization documents.

This bill would increase access to licenses required for certain professions by

- Ensuring that licensing bodies do not deny occupational or professional licenses solely based on an applicant's immigration status.

As noted above, the list of eligible immigrants would include DACA recipients, TPS holders, individuals admitted to the U.S. with parole, and asylum seekers.

Why would H. 3288 be beneficial?

H. 3288 would facilitate immigrants' integration and ability to contribute to the state's economy. The bill would provide the following benefits:

- **Expand Opportunities for Economic Contribution:** This legislation would [open doors](#) for DACA recipients, TPS holders, parolees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants with work authorization to pursue careers requiring licenses. In June 2024, South Carolina had [4,930 active DACA recipients](#).
- **Promote Sustainable, State-wide Economic Growth:** Enabling skilled immigrants to work in their areas of expertise can contribute to economic development and innovation. Researchers at Clemson University [estimated](#) that the jobs filled by immigrants licensed under this bill could generate an additional annual economic output of \$6.77 million for South Carolina.

- **Address Critical Workforce Shortages:** By allowing more individuals to obtain professional licenses, the bill could help alleviate workforce shortages in critical sectors, including healthcare and education.

The National Immigration Forum would like to thank Nicci Matthey, policy consultant, for developing this bill summary.