

## FREEDOM TO INVEST IN TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE ACT (H.R. 1151/S. 756)

### Talking Points

- The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) urges legislators to **support the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act** (H.R. 1151/S. 756), which would expand the use of 529 savings plans for educational expenses related to obtaining and maintaining professional licenses and certifications.
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) permits contributions to state-sponsored education savings vehicles, known as a 529 savings plan, to help pay for most post-secondary educational expenses. Contributions to these plans are exempt from federal taxes if funds are used to **pay for qualified education expenses**, including for enrollment, attendance, books, supplies, and equipment.
- 529 savings plans are a critical tool to help families save over time for education expenses, with **many plans allowing contributions as little as \$25**.
- Currently, **529 savings plans do NOT cover expenses related to postsecondary credentials** and skills training that are required for many professions, **including landscape architecture**.
- Landscape architects are **licensed in all 50 states, and the District of Columbia**, and are charged with protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare. Licensing of the profession provides a broad base of public protection from substantial risks of physical injury, harm to property, and potential for economic damage.
- **Landscape architects plan and design all outdoor spaces** such as community master plans; streets and sidewalks; water management projects; parks; plazas; campuses; and other active public areas, which must account for a variety of potential hazards. Significant physical and financial harm has occurred when landscape architectural projects are not designed by licensed professionals.
- Licensure of landscape architects includes a rigorous STEM focused bachelor's or master's degree education. Licensure candidates must also acquire real-world experience and **pass a comprehensive national licensing exam to be recognized as a professional landscape architect**. In most states, once licensed, professional landscape architects must achieve a certain number of continuing education credits to maintain their license and continue working in the field.
- Licensed professionals and licensure candidates, including landscape architects, **incur substantial costs** for the educational and professional development requirements **to obtain and maintain their license**.
- Under this legislation (H.R. 1151/S. 756), landscape architecture candidates and professionals would be able to use 529 savings plans to cover costs associated with licensure. The **average cost to obtain initial licensure**, including costs for exam prep and examinations, **is about \$3,500**. The average cost to maintain licensure, including annual continuing education, is around \$750 per year.
- The Joint Committee on Taxation estimated the bill would only **cost \$85 million over ten years**.
- There are over **800 organizations**, including ASLA, that have joined to form Tomorrow's Workforce Coalition to advocate for this bill's passage.
- **The ASK** — House of Representatives: **Cosponsor H.R. 1151, the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act**, to strengthen America's workforce and provide some fiscal relief for families.
- **The ASK** — Senate: **Cosponsor S. 756, the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act**, to strengthen America's workforce and provide some fiscal relief for families.