

SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
NINETY-THIRD SESSION

S.F. No. 4814

(SENATE AUTHORS: HOWE)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
03/11/2024	12133	Introduction and first reading Referred to State and Local Government and Veterans

1.1

A bill for an act

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relating to state government; requiring plain language in written materials for

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state-issued professional licensing; requiring a report; proposing coding for new

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law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 15.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

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Section 1. [15.996] PLAIN LANGUAGE IN LICENSE WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS.

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Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For purposes of this subdivision, the following terms have

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the meanings given:

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(1) "plain language standards" means the requirements specified in subdivision 2,

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paragraph (a), and the requirements of the Plain Writing Act, Public Law 111-274, and

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governor's Executive Order 14-07; and

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(2) "written examination" means the written portion of an examination in English for a

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license issued by the state.

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Subd. 2. **Plain language.** (a) By February 1, 2025, each commissioner must implement

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plain language standards for the written portion of a knowledge examination to ensure the

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written examination is a fair assessment of the license applicant's knowledge of relevant

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subject matter. The new written portion of the knowledge examination, to the extent

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practicable, must be organized to serve the reader's needs and written using clear, simplified

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language with the following grammatical standards:

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(1) "you" and other pronouns address the test-taker directly;

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(2) utilize the active voice;

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(3) use short, simple sentences and straightforward questions;

- 2.1 (4) avoid complex and compound sentence structures;
- 2.2 (5) utilize commonly used and familiar words;
- 2.3 (6) avoid turning verbs into nouns through nominalization;
- 2.4 (7) minimize the use of abbreviations;
- 2.5 (8) place words carefully to avoid large gaps between the subject, verb, and object in a
- 2.6 sentence;
- 2.7 (9) avoid confusing terms such as "either, or" and "neither, nor";
- 2.8 (10) utilize simple verb tenses, including the simple present verb tense where practicable,
- 2.9 to explain confusing or complex concepts;
- 2.10 (11) omit double negatives and terms like "except for," "unless," and "indicated
- 2.11 otherwise";
- 2.12 (12) avoid hidden terms and use concrete, familiar words to describe confusing or
- 2.13 complex concepts or items;
- 2.14 (13) omit excess and unnecessary words;
- 2.15 (14) use the word "must" to express requirements;
- 2.16 (15) put exceptions at the end of a question;
- 2.17 (16) place modifying terms in correct locations; and
- 2.18 (17) any other recommended strategies and techniques designed to offer clear
- 2.19 communication to test-takers.
- 2.20 (b) Revisions made to the written examination must meet the plain language standards
- 2.21 of this section.
- 2.22 (c) A written examination must be reviewed for compliance with the plain language
- 2.23 standards and approved by the revisor of statutes before implementation.
- 2.24 **Sec. 2. REPORT; PLAIN LANGUAGE IMPLEMENTATION FOR LICENSING.**
- 2.25 By February 1, 2026, each commissioner must report to the chairs and ranking minority
- 2.26 members of the committees in the house of representatives and the senate with primary
- 2.27 jurisdiction for state government on the implementation of the plain language requirements
- 2.28 in Minnesota Statutes, section 15.996, for each license type issued by the commissioner.