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**SENATE BILL 5077**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Dozier, Mullet, Brown, Das, Warnick, and Wilson, C.; by request of Department of Financial Institutions

AN ACT Relating to providing authority to licensed companies to allow licensed mortgage loan originators to work from their residences without the company licensing the residence as a branch office of the company; and amending RCW 31.04.027, 31.04.075, 19.146.0201, and 19.146.265.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 31.04.027 and 2018 c 62 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is a violation of this chapter for a licensee, its officers, directors, employees, or independent contractors, or any other person subject to this chapter to:

(a) Directly or indirectly employ any scheme, device, or artifice to defraud or mislead any borrower, to defraud or mislead any lender, or to defraud or mislead any person;

(b) Directly or indirectly engage in any unfair or deceptive practice toward any person;

(c) Directly or indirectly obtain property by fraud or misrepresentation;

(d) Solicit or enter into a contract with a borrower that provides in substance that the consumer loan company may earn a fee or commission through the consumer loan company's best efforts to obtain a loan even though no loan is actually obtained for the borrower;

(e) Solicit, advertise, or enter into a contract for specific interest rates, points, or other financing terms unless the terms are actually available at the time of soliciting, advertising, or contracting;

(f) Fail to make disclosures to loan applicants as required by RCW 31.04.102 and any other applicable state or federal law;

(g) Make, in any manner, any false or deceptive statement or representation with regard to the rates, points, or other financing terms or conditions for a residential mortgage loan or engage in bait and switch advertising;

(h) Negligently make any false statement or knowingly and willfully make any omission of material fact in connection with any reports filed with the department by a licensee or in connection with any investigation conducted by the department;

(i) Make any payment, directly or indirectly, to any appraiser of a property, for the purposes of influencing the independent judgment of the appraiser with respect to the value of the property;

(j) Accept from any borrower at or near the time a loan is made and in advance of any default an execution of, or induce any borrower to execute, any instrument of conveyance, not including a mortgage or deed of trust, to the lender of any ownership interest in the borrower's primary dwelling that is the security for the borrower's loan;

(k) Obtain at the time of closing a release of future damages for usury or other damages or penalties provided by law or a waiver of the provisions of this chapter;

(l) Advertise any rate of interest without conspicuously disclosing the annual percentage rate implied by that rate of interest;

(m) Violate any applicable state or federal law relating to the activities governed by this chapter; or

(n) Make or originate loans from any unlicensed location. It is not a violation for a licensed mortgage loan originator to originate loans from an unlicensed location if that location is the licensed mortgage loan originator's residence and the licensed mortgage loan originator and licensed sponsoring company comply with RCW 31.04.075.

(2) It is a violation of this chapter for a student education loan servicer to:

(a) Conduct licensable activity from any unlicensed location;

(b) Misrepresent or omit any material information in connection with the servicing of a student education loan including, but not limited to, misrepresenting the amount, nature, conditions, or terms of any fee or payment due or claimed to be due on a student education loan, the terms and conditions of the loan agreement, the availability of loan discharge or forgiveness options, the availability and terms of and process for enrolling in income-driven repayment, or the borrower's obligations under the loan;

(c) Provide inaccurate information to a credit bureau, thereby harming a student education loan borrower's creditworthiness, including failing to report both the favorable and unfavorable payment history of the student education loan;

(d) Fail to report to a consumer credit bureau at least annually if the student education loan servicer regularly reports information to a credit bureau;

(e) Refuse to communicate with an authorized representative of the student education loan borrower who provides a written authorization signed by the student education loan borrower. However, the student education loan servicer may adopt procedures reasonably related to verifying that the representative is in fact authorized to act on behalf of the student education loan borrower;

(f) Refuse to communicate with the student education loan borrower or an authorized representative of the student education loan borrower;

(g) Apply payments made by a borrower to the outstanding balance of a student education loan, or allocate a payment across a group of student education loans, in a manner that does not conform with the borrower's stated intent. However, this subsection (2)(g) does not require application of a student education loan in a manner contrary to the express terms of the promissory note;

(h) Fail to respond within fifteen calendar days to communications from the student loan advocate, or within such shorter, reasonable time as the student loan advocate may request in his or her communication; or

(i) Fail to provide a response within fifteen calendar days to a consumer complaint submitted to the servicer by the student loan advocate. If necessary, a licensee may request additional time up to a maximum of forty-five calendar days, provided that such request is accompanied by an explanation why such additional time is reasonable and necessary.

(3) The director's obligations or duties under chapter 62, Laws of 2018 are subject to section 21, chapter 62, Laws of 2018.

**Sec.**  RCW 31.04.075 and 2015 c 229 s 23 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The licensee may not maintain more than one place of business under the same license((~~, but the~~)) unless:

(a) The director ((~~may issue~~)) authorizes more than one license to the same licensee upon approval of an application by the licensee in a form and manner established by the director; or

(b) The place of business is a licensed mortgage loan originator's residence and the licensed mortgage loan originator and licensed sponsoring company comply with state and federal information security requirements and all other requirements set forth in rule for mortgage loan originators working from their residences as provided in this chapter and in rule, consistent with the purposes of this section.

(2) Whenever a licensee wishes to change the place of business to a street address other than that reported in the nationwide mortgage licensing system and registry, the licensee must give prior written notice to the director, pay the fee, and obtain the director's approval.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.146.0201 and 2015 c 229 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

It is a violation of this chapter for loan originators, mortgage brokers, officers, directors, employees, independent contractors, or any other person subject to this chapter to:

(1) Directly or indirectly employ any scheme, device, or artifice to defraud or mislead borrowers or lenders or to defraud any person;

(2) Directly or indirectly engage in any unfair or deceptive practice toward any person;

(3) Directly or indirectly obtain property by fraud or misrepresentation;

(4) Solicit or enter into a contract with a borrower that provides in substance that the mortgage broker may earn a fee or commission through the mortgage broker's "best efforts" to obtain a loan even though no loan is actually obtained for the borrower;

(5) Solicit, advertise, or enter into a contract for specific interest rates, points, or other financing terms unless the terms are actually available at the time of soliciting, advertising, or contracting from a person exempt from licensing under RCW 19.146.020(1)(f) or a lender with whom the mortgage broker maintains a written correspondent or loan broker agreement under RCW 19.146.040;

(6) Fail to make disclosures to loan applicants and noninstitutional investors as required by RCW 19.146.030 and any other applicable state or federal law;

(7) Make, in any manner, any false or deceptive statement or representation with regard to the rates, points, or other financing terms or conditions for a residential mortgage loan or engage in bait and switch advertising;

(8) Negligently make any false statement or knowingly and willfully make any omission of material fact in connection with any reports filed by a licensee or in connection with any investigation conducted by the department;

(9) Make any payment, directly or indirectly, to any appraiser of a property, for the purposes of influencing the independent judgment of the appraiser with respect to the value of the property;

(10) Advertise any rate of interest without conspicuously disclosing the annual percentage rate implied by such rate of interest;

(11) Fail to comply with state and federal laws applicable to the activities governed by this chapter;

(12) Fail to pay third-party providers no later than thirty days after the recording of the loan closing documents or ninety days after completion of the third-party service, whichever comes first, unless otherwise agreed or unless the third-party service provider has been notified in writing that a bona fide dispute exists regarding the performance or quality of the third-party service;

(13) Collect, charge, attempt to collect or charge or use or propose any agreement purporting to collect or charge any fee prohibited by RCW 19.146.030 or 19.146.070;

(14)(a) Except when complying with (b) and (c) of this subsection, act as a loan originator in any transaction (i) in which the loan originator acts or has acted as a real estate broker or salesperson or (ii) in which another person doing business under the same licensed real estate broker acts or has acted as a real estate broker or salesperson;

(b) Prior to providing mortgage services to the borrower, a loan originator, in addition to other disclosures required by this chapter and other laws, must provide to the borrower the following written disclosure:

THIS IS TO GIVE YOU NOTICE THAT I OR ONE OF MY ASSOCIATES HAVE/HAS ACTED AS A REAL ESTATE BROKER OR SALESPERSON REPRESENTING THE BUYER/SELLER IN THE SALE OF THIS PROPERTY TO YOU. I AM ALSO A LOAN ORIGINATOR, AND WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE MORTGAGE SERVICES TO YOU IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR LOAN TO PURCHASE THE PROPERTY.

YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO USE ME AS A LOAN ORIGINATOR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TRANSACTION. YOU ARE FREE TO COMPARISON SHOP WITH OTHER MORTGAGE BROKERS AND LENDERS, AND TO SELECT ANY MORTGAGE BROKER OR LENDER OF YOUR CHOOSING; and

(c) A real estate broker or salesperson licensed under chapter 18.85 RCW who also acts as a mortgage broker must carry on such mortgage broker business activities and must maintain such person's mortgage broker business records separate and apart from the real estate broker activities conducted pursuant to chapter 18.85 RCW. Such activities are separate and apart even if they are conducted at an office location with a common entrance and mailing address, so long as each business is clearly identified by a sign visible to the public, each business is physically separated within the office facility, and no deception of the public as to the separate identities of the broker business firms results. This subsection (14)(c) does not require a real estate broker or salesperson licensed under chapter 18.85 RCW who also acts as a mortgage broker to maintain a physical separation within the office facility for the conduct of its real estate and mortgage broker activities where the director determines that maintaining such physical separation would constitute an undue financial hardship upon the mortgage broker and is unnecessary for the protection of the public;

(15) Fail to comply with any provision of RCW 19.146.030 through 19.146.080 or any rule adopted under those sections;

(16) Originate loans from any unlicensed location. It is not a violation for a licensed mortgage loan originator to originate loans from an unlicensed location if that location is the licensed mortgage loan originator's residence and the licensed mortgage loan originator and licensed sponsoring company comply with RCW 19.146.265;

(17) Solicit or accept from any borrower at or near the time a loan application is taken, and in advance of any foreclosure of the borrower's existing residential mortgage loan or loans, any instrument of conveyance of any interest in the borrower's primary dwelling that is the subject of the residential mortgage loan or loans; or

(18) Make a residential mortgage loan unless the loan is table funded.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.146.265 and 2015 c 229 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

A ((~~licensed mortgage broker may apply to the~~)) licensee may not maintain more than one place of business under the same license unless:

(1) The director ((~~for authority~~)) approves the licensed mortgage broker's application, made in a form and manner established in rule, to establish one or more branch offices under the same or different name as the main office ((~~upon the payment of a fee as prescribed by the director by rule~~)). The applicant must be in good standing with the department, as defined in rule by the director, and the director must promptly issue a license for each of the branch offices showing the location of the main office and the particular branch; or

(2) The place of business is a licensed mortgage loan originator's residence and the licensed mortgage loan originator and licensed sponsoring company comply with state and federal information security requirements and other requirements as provided in this chapter and in rule, consistent with the purposes of this section.

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