

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5092

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

**Title:** An act relating to providing an exemption from continuing competency requirements for registered nurses who seek advanced nursing degrees.

**Brief Description:** Providing an exemption from continuing competency requirements for registered nurses who seek advanced nursing degrees.

**Sponsors:** Senators Benton, Shin, Braun, Roach and Honeyford.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Health Care & Wellness: 3/26/13, 3/28/13 [DPA].

#### **Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by Committee)**

- Requires the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission to adopt rules on continuing competency.
- Exempts registered nurses from continuing competency requirements while they are pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jinkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Clibborn, Green, Harris, Manweller, Moeller, Morrell, Riccelli, Rodne, Ross, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

**Staff:** Jim Morishima (786-7191).

#### **Background:**

A registered nurse is a person who performs acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment, and skill based on the principles of the biological, physiological, behavioral, and sociological sciences in several areas, including:

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- the observation, assessment, diagnosis, care or counsel, and health teaching of individuals with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities, or in the maintenance of health or prevention of illness of others;
- the administration, supervision, delegation, and evaluation of nursing practice;
- the teaching of nursing; and
- the execution of a medical regimen as prescribed by a physician, dentist, osteopathic physician, podiatric physician, physician assistant, osteopathic physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner (or as directed by a licensed midwife within his or her scope of practice).

Pursuant to rules adopted by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC), registered nurses must complete at least 531 hours of active practice and at least 45 clock hours of continuing education every three years. Under recent guidance issued by the NCQAC, time spent pursuing additional education can count as practice hours. The guidance lists the following as examples of degree programs: Associate Degree in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Science, Master in Public Health, Doctor in Nursing Practice, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor in Education, and Juris Doctor.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The NCQAC must adopt rules on continuing competency. The rules must include exemptions from the continuing competency requirements for registered nurses seeking advanced nursing degrees. The exemption for registered nurses does not prohibit the NCQAC from providing additional exemptions for nurses enrolled in advanced education programs.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The amended bill:

- requires the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) to adopt rules on continuing competency;
- removes the following requirements for a nurse to qualify for the exemption from nurse practice hours:
  - Washington domicile and licensure;
  - enrollment for at least six credit hours in a bachelor's of science in nursing program or a master's of science nursing program;
  - maintenance of passing grades; and
  - completion of the program within three years;
- allows the NCQAC to make exemptions from the continuing competency requirements for a registered nurse who is seeking an advanced nursing degree; and
- clarifies that this does not prohibit the NCQAC from granting additional exemptions to nurses enrolled in advanced education programs.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available. New fiscal note requested on March 28, 2013.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) None.

(With concerns) This bill should be amended to be consistent with the NCQAC rules on the subject. In 2011 the NCQAC adopted continuing competency requirements. Currently, a person may satisfy the active practice requirements through advanced education. The exemption in this bill is narrower than the one provided by the NCQAC in that it only applies to registered nurses and does not recognize other types of advanced education.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Paula Meyer, Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission; and Melissa Johnson, Washington State Nurses Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.