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SENATE BILL 5505

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State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Franklin, Costa and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/24/2001. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing the supply of dentists to meet the  
2 critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved  
3 areas; amending RCW 18.32.215; adding new sections to chapter 18.32  
4 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and declares that  
7 access to dental care is severely hampered by a critical and emergent  
8 shortage of dental providers in Washington state. Dental disease is an  
9 epidemic among poor children, the elderly, the disabled, and anyone who  
10 does not have access to adequate dental care. Dental decay is  
11 worsening among children under four years of age, with forty-one  
12 percent of the state's Headstart children needing treatment for dental  
13 decay. One-third of the dentists in this state are over fifty-five  
14 years old, and forty-five percent of dentists in Yakima county are  
15 planning to retire in the next five years. The lack of qualified  
16 dentists poses a serious and compelling threat to the oral health of  
17 the people of this state.

18 Shortages are also due to licensing restrictions that have  
19 discouraged qualified dentists from coming into this state. The

1 legislature finds that there is a great resource of dentists in the  
2 military whose retirement from duty offers untapped opportunity to  
3 continue their practice as civilians. Increasing the number of  
4 dentists from other states and from military installations would enable  
5 retiring dentists in this state to sell their practices to other  
6 qualified practitioners. The legislature intends to improve access to  
7 dental care in this state by increasing the number of dentists willing  
8 to work in underserved areas, as well as to assure their availability  
9 to every resident of the state.

10 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.32.215 and 1994 sp.s. c 9 s 219 are each amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 An applicant holding a valid license and currently engaged in  
13 practice in another state may be granted a license without examination  
14 required by this chapter, on the payment of any required fees, if the  
15 commission determines that the other state's licensing standards are  
16 (~~substantively~~) substantially equivalent to the standards in this  
17 state and the applicant is a graduate of an approved dental school.  
18 The commission may also require the applicant to: (1) File with the  
19 commission documentation certifying the applicant is licensed to  
20 practice in another state; and (2) provide information as the  
21 commission deems necessary pertaining to the conditions and criteria of  
22 the Uniform Disciplinary Act, chapter 18.130 RCW, and to demonstrate to  
23 the commission a knowledge of Washington law pertaining to the practice  
24 of dentistry.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 18.32 RCW  
26 to read as follows:

27 An applicant holding a valid license currently engaged in practice  
28 in another state may be granted a license without examination required  
29 by this chapter, on payment of the required fees, if the commission  
30 determines that the applicant is a graduate of an approved dental  
31 school and conditions his or her practice in a critical needs area, as  
32 defined by the secretary considering federal guidelines for serving  
33 patients in underserved areas. After completing three years of  
34 practice in a critical needs area, the applicant may be granted a  
35 license without examination to practice anywhere in this state. The  
36 commission may also require the applicant to: (1) File with the  
37 commission documentation certifying the applicant is licensed to

1 practice in another state; and (2) provide information as the  
2 commission deems necessary pertaining to the conditions and criteria of  
3 the Uniform Disciplinary Act, chapter 18.130 RCW, and to demonstrate to  
4 the commission a knowledge of Washington law pertaining to the practice  
5 of dentistry.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 18.32 RCW  
7 to read as follows:

8 An applicant holding a valid license and currently engaged as a  
9 dentist in military service in any state may be granted a license  
10 without examination required by this chapter, on payment of the  
11 required fees, if the commission determines that the applicant is a  
12 graduate of an approved dental school. The commission may also require  
13 the applicant to: (1) File with the commission documentation  
14 certifying the applicant is licensed to practice in another state; and  
15 (2) provide information as the commission deems necessary pertaining to  
16 the conditions and criteria of the Uniform Disciplinary Act, chapter  
17 18.130 RCW, and to demonstrate to the commission a knowledge of  
18 Washington law pertaining to the practice of dentistry.

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