

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2931

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to using the health professions account for professional education and recruitment and retention.

Brief Description: Using the health professions account for professional education and recruitment and retention.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Schual-Berke, Rockefeller, Cody and Wallace.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/3/04, 2/5/04 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/9/04, 2/10/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows individual health professions boards and commissions to spend resources in excess of the costs of administering that profession's program on activities that support the profession and improve the disciplinary process.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Edwards, Moeller, Rodne, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Alexander.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health and the 16 health professions boards and commissions regulate over 250,000 health care professionals in 57 professions. These health care professionals are required to bear the costs of regulating their profession. Credentialing fees and examination fees are established by the Secretary of Health at an amount to cover the estimated costs of licensing and disciplinary activities. These funds are deposited into the Health Professions

Account and are spent according to an appropriation request by the Secretary of Health every two years.

Summary of Bill:

Health professions boards and commissions that have resources in the Health Professions Account that exceed 120 percent of the cost of administering that profession's program may spend any funds over that amount to support activities that promote that profession including professional education and recruitment and retention. The Secretary of Health determines whether the 120 percent threshold has been met.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: There are millions of dollars in the Health Professions Account that are paid for by health care professionals that they cannot use to improve their profession.

Testimony Against: There is no limit on how the boards and commissions may spend the money. In some professions expenditures are outpacing revenues.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Campbell, prime sponsor; and Lori Bielinski, Washington State Chiropractic Association.

(Support with concerns) Melanie Stewart, American Association of Massage Therapy, Washington Chapter.

(Oppose unless amended) Bonnie King, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cody, Conway, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Miloscia, Ruderman and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Anderson, Boldt, Buck, Chandler, Clements, Cox, McDonald, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Amy Hanson (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

The bill includes legislative findings on the use of funds in the Health Professions Account. A board or commission must consult with the Secretary of Health before spending excess funds. Excess funds may be used to improve the disciplinary process. The requirement that only funds over 120 percent of the cost of administering the profession's program is eliminated. The Secretary of Health must request an appropriation as part of the biennial budget request in order to implement this bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (In support with amendments) Many of the health professions have gone through the hard experience of having gotten a reduction in their fees and then not long afterwards, because of unexpected occurrences, need to have the fees increased again. The cost of each of the professions is determined by the number of investigations and these can vary from year to year. The intent of this bill is good, but it would be better as a study so all of the health professions can be brought together to come up with a better solution before next year.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support with amendments) Lonnie Johns-Brown, Washington State Society for Clinical Social Work.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.