

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 6193

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2006

Title: An act relating to health professions work force supply and demographics information.

Brief Description: Requiring surveys of health professions work force supply and demographics.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Regala, Keiser, Eide, Prentice, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Fairley, McAuliffe, Fraser, Brown, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Parlette and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/12/06, 1/18/06 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 1/31/06, 2/6/06 [DP2S, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 2/13/06, 43-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6193 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kastama, Kline and Poulsen.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6193 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Parlette, Pflug, Roach and Schoesler.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: Persons of color experience disparities from the general population in education, employment, healthy living conditions, access to health care, and other social determinants of health.

Research has shown that increasing the number of people of color in the health care workforce and expanding the cultural competence of everyone who works in health care can reduce health disparities.

For quite some time, communities of color have been voicing concerns about health disparities. Out of these concerns and policy makers' sensitivity to the issue, Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419 was introduced and passed by the Legislature in 2004 creating the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities (Committee).

The Committee issued a report on health disparities in Washington on November 1, 2005. The report included findings and recommendations to be considered by the Legislature. The Committee identified the need to develop a workforce that is representative of the diversity of our state's population. Prior to developing such a work force, relevant and accurate data on health care professionals, students in health care professions, and recipients of health services must first be collected.

Among the Committee's recommendations is a request that the Department of Health work with the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) to develop a survey to collect relevant workforce data. The Board has 11 members and works in conjunction with labor, business, and government leaders to develop strategies for a well trained, highly paid work force.

Summary of Bill: Periodically, to the extent funds are provided, the Department of Health, in collaboration with the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board, distributes a voluntary survey to licensed health care providers.

At a minimum, the survey collects data related to age, gender, race, ethnicity, area of practice, zip code of practice location, years in practice, and type of facility where a provider practices.

The department provides a public set of the data collected but the data will be made available in a manner that protects the confidentiality of survey participants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For (Health & Long-Term Care): An accurate survey collecting data regarding the age, location, and type of practice for our current health care workforce is a priority. It is very important that our state is able to provide a diverse health care workforce in the future. Before that can be accomplished, we need to know what the need will be.

Testimony Against (Health & Long-Term Care): None.

Testimony Other (Health & Long-Term Care): There are technical changes that need to be made to address operational concerns.

Who Testified (Health & Long-Term Care): PRO: Ed Phippen, Washington State Health Authority; Alton McDonald, National Action Network; Frankie T. Manning, State Board of Health.

OTHER: Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Training Board.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): Health disparities are an important issue, both locally and nationwide. The bill, along with the others proposed by the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities, represents the input of a wide range of people and points of view, including health professionals, higher education institutions, and the minority affairs commissions. Addressing health disparities will improve health, and reduce health care costs. The demographics and racial composition of our society are changing. It is important to have better information on the characteristics of our health workforce to see that it is keeping up with those changes.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Who Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Rosa Franklin, prime sponsor.

House Amendment(s): The House amendment requires the survey to be conducted every two years instead of periodically. The Department of Health is required to seek advice from researchers likely to use the data when developing the survey. Gender, education, training background, and multiple zip codes of practice locations are added to the list of minimum elements to consider. The Department of Health is required to report on the effectiveness of the survey program by July 1, 2009. The act expires January 1, 2012.