

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6234

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 18, 1992

Brief Description: Granting temporary licenses to dental hygienists licensed in another state.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators West, M. Kreidler, Johnson and Wojahn)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6234 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; M. Kreidler, Newhouse, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

Hearing Dates: February 6, 1992

BACKGROUND:

In 1971 the dental hygienist laws were revised to allow dental hygienists to give injections of anesthetic and to place restorations into cavities prepared by a dentist. Washington is the only state that includes these two procedures among the scope of practice of dental hygienists. Other states allow dental hygienists to perform one or the other of these services, or neither, but not both.

In 1991 the Legislature passed a law that grants temporary licenses to health care providers licensed in other states with licensing standards substantially equivalent to Washington. Since almost no other state allows dental hygienists to both give injections of anesthetic and to perform restoration work, dental hygienists relocating to Washington generally do not qualify for the temporary licenses authorized in 1991.

SUMMARY:

Dental hygienists currently engaged in active practice and licensed in another state shall be granted upon application to the Department of Health a temporary nonrenewable license valid for 18 months. The licensee may perform the listed limited duties of dental hygienists, but may not give injections of local anesthetic, place restorations into cavities prepared by dentists or perform other restoration services, or perform soft tissue curettage.

The applicant for a temporary license must have graduated from a dental hygiene program approved by the secretary, provide

information deemed necessary by the secretary and meet requirements for asepsis and AIDS education.

Active practice is defined as 560 hours of practice in the preceding 30 months.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Dentists and dental hygienists need mobility in their professions and the temporary licenses in this bill will enable hygienists to come into this state and practice while they learn the new procedures. This helps those dental hygienists who come here as military personnel or as spouses of military personnel. Moving is a great financial burden and emotionally traumatic and this bill will reduce the burden by allowing dental hygienists to practice right away. Two years is absolutely necessary to get on their feet and pass the dental hygienists exam.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Temporary licensure is acceptable, but this bill goes too far. This bill is premature because HB 1960 which was passed last year addressed temporary licenses and mandated a manpower survey. Without results of that survey, it is too soon to tell if the hygienists who will come in with temporary licenses are needed. Also, schools are gearing up to train more hygienists. Dental assistants make good money, so the dental hygienists who come to Washington are not being deprived of the ability to make a living. This bill will allow people to practice without testing their abilities. Moving from state to state is not that traumatic that they need two years of licensure before qualifying under Washington's dental hygienist licensing laws.

TESTIFIED: PRO: Linda Hull, Wallace C. Volz, D.D.S, Washington State Dental Association; Barbara Kempkes, Kirkland; Dawn Larson, Seattle; CON: Jeff Larson, Sharon Golightly, Martha Fales, Carol Robertson, Washington State Dental Hygienist Association