

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2711

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Brief Description: Funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Morrell, Cody, McIntire, Chase and Conway).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/25/04, 2/26/04 [DPA-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/1/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Brandland, Franklin and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: In 2002, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing their numbers. The board's 2002 report to the Legislature indicated that in 1999, there were approximately 52,000 licensed registered nurses in Washington. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, if the demand for nurses continues to outstrip supply at its current rate, Washington is forecasted to experience a shortage of over 25,000 registered nurses by 2020.

Summary of Bill: The Nursing Resource Center Account is created. The account is funded through a \$5 surcharge to licenses for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The Department of Health shall use the funds to contract with a central nursing resource center to: maintain information on the current supply and demand of nurses; form partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession; evaluate the effectiveness of nursing education; provide technical assistance and information related to state and national nursing resources; promote initiatives to ensure a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace environment for nurses; and promote a positive image of the nursing profession.

The account is a nonappropriated account and the Secretary of Health may authorize expenditures. The department may be compensated for the reasonable costs associated with the collection and distribution of the surcharge. The department may also adopt rules to implement the account.

The central nursing resource center must report all progress and activities conducted by the center to the relevant committees of the Legislature by November 30, 2007.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The striking amendment adds a requirement that the central nursing resource center report to the Legislature by November 30, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Health & Long-Term Care): This bill funds a resource center to collect meaningful information and work with industry to recruit and retain nurses. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board should not have oversight because their focus is broader than nurses. Nursing is a dynamic profession and nurses need to step up to the plate. It is critical that Washington retain nurses.

Other: Should the Legislature support this, it should do so in cooperation with the task force. Expertise in this area lies with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The center cannot work in isolation of other health care professions. There is no oversight by the stakeholders in this bill, nor is there any accountability.

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

Testified (Health & Long-Term Care): PRO: Judy Huntington, WA State Nurses Association; Helen Kuebel, Lower Columbia College, Nursing Program Director; Robin Larson, Lower Columbia College, nursing student; Ron Weaver, DOH (support concept); Bill Gray (support concept); Ellie Memies, SEIU (concerns).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The state is approaching a critical shortage of nurses. The nurse resource center would collect information on the workforce, and promote strategies that would facilitate recruitment and retention. Nurses are willing to pay this fee in order to promote their profession. Several other states have established such centers.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): The Workforce Training Board is already doing most of the things proposed in the bill, with federal funds. Not all of the nursing community has been involved in crafting this proposal.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Representative Phyllis Kenney, prime sponsor; Representative Dawn Morrel; Tamra Warnke, WA State Nurses Association. CON: Ellie Menzies, Service Employees International Union, #1199.