

5966

Sponsor(s): Senators Deccio and Winsley

Brief Description: Increasing the supply of dentists and dental hygienists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas. Revised for 1st Substitute: Increasing the supply of dentists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas.

**SB 5966 - DIGEST**

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 1ST SUB)

Finds and declares that access to dental care is severely hampered by a critical and emergent shortage of dental providers in Washington state. Dental disease is an epidemic among poor children, the elderly, the disabled, and anyone who does not have access to adequate dental care.

Finds that the lack of qualified dentists and dental hygienists poses a serious and compelling threat to the oral health of the people of this state.

Declares that shortages are also due to licensing restrictions that have discouraged qualified dentists and dental hygienists from coming into this state. Increasing the number of dentists from other states and from military service would enable retiring dentists in this state to sell their practices to other qualified practitioners.