

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5599

As Passed Senate, March 15, 2005

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

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Benson, Kline and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/7/05, 3/2/05 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/15/05, 33-13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5599 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

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 noted that hospital registered nurse vacancy rates were 9.2 percent statewide in 2001 and that there is potential for more severe shortages as the population ages. According to a report by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Washington state is forecasted to experience a shortage of over 25,000 registered nurses by 2020. There are approximately 70,000 registered nurses in Washington.

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 (Department) must consult with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to use the funds to provide grants to a Central Nursing Resource Center that must be not-for-profit and that is comprised of and led by nurses. The Central Nursing Resource Center will demonstrate coordination with relevant nursing constituents and must have as its mission to contribute to the health and wellness of the residents of Washington by ensuring that there is an adequate nursing force.

The grants may be used to: (1) maintain information on the current and projected supply and demand of nurses; (2) monitor and validate trends in the nursing program applicant pool; (3) facilitate partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession; (4) evaluate the effectiveness of nursing education; (5) provide

technical assistance and information; (6) promote initiatives to ensure a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace environment for nurses; (7) educate the public about careers and opportunities in nursing; and (8) other activities defined by the Department and the Central Nursing Resource Center.

The account is a nonappropriation 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 and the administration of the grants. The Department may also adopt rules to implement the account. The Central Nursing Resource Center may not use money from the account for administrative costs associated with activities not specifically delineated or for lobbying.

Grants will be awarded annually, with funds distributed quarterly. The first grant distribution must be within six months of the enactment of the law. The Central Nursing Resource Center must annually report to the Department on meeting the grant objectives.

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, 2008.

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: Such centers exist in other states and are providing a lot of assistance in addressing nursing shortages. The center would be able to assist the state in gathering information to inform public policy decisions. It would be helpful to prospective students to be able to have a clearinghouse for all of the information. The center would be especially helpful in determining the best ways to encourage more men and minorities to enter the field.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Dorothy Detlor, Washington State University Intercollegiate College of Nursing; Marilyn Savage, UFCW Local 141; Kara Tompkins, Susan Jacobsen, Washington State Nurses Association; Elizabeth Thomas, Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization; Barbara Ringhouse, Northwest Organization for Nurse Executives.

House Amendment(s): The striker passed in the house changes the date, on which the resource center must report on progress back to the legislature, from 2011 to 2008. The striker inserts a requirement that the Department of Health must conduct a review of the program and make recommendations on the effectiveness of the program and whether it should continue. This review must be funded, paid for with the funds from the nursing resource center account, and must be completed by June 30, 2012.

The striker creates an expiration date of June 30, 2013 for the exception that would allow the additional \$5 surcharge for nurses' licenses. It substitutes the word "initiatives" for the word "strategies" in terms of options to enhance patient safety and the quality of care. The striker also removes a clause that would have allowed the grants to be used to fund "other activities

as defined by the department and mutually agreed upon with the central nursing resource center." Finally, the striker removes the clause prohibiting use of the money from the account for administrative costs that are not associated with the specific activities described in the act.

Passed House: 93-1.