

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5308

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to the use of examinations in the credentialing of health professionals.

**Brief Description:** Changing certain health professional examination procedures.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, Moyer, Franklin and Deccio; by request of Department of Health).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 3/21/95, 3/31/95 [DPA].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Hymes, Vice Chairman; Cody, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Casada; Conway; Crouse; Sherstad and Skinner.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Kessler and Morris.

**Staff:** John Welsh (786-7133).

**Background:** Most of the health care professions currently regulated by the state have the option of using regional or national examinations to establish qualifications for licensure. However, some professions are required by statute to individually prepare separate state exams.

The statutes also contain overly prescriptive language regarding how exams must be conducted and the subjects to be included. Obsolete provisions and terminology are also referenced.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** Boards and/or examining committees for the following professions are able to use national or regional exams: chiropractic,

dispensing optician, optometry, dental hygiene, Board of Pharmacy (pharmacy assistants), physical therapy, psychology, and veterinary medicine.

In addition, exam procedures and requirements are streamlined, and other technical changes in language are made in the chiropractic, dental, dental hygiene, optometry, veterinary medicine, and massage therapy practice acts.

The Secretary of Health is required to review and coordinate proposed rules, interpretive statements, policy statements, and declaratory orders of boards and commissions for comment on their effect on existing health policies and practices.

The powers of the state Board of Denture Technology are transferred to the Secretary of Health, including administering examinations for licensure, rule-making authority, setting examination and licensing fees, approving schools, and as the disciplining authority under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. The Secretary is required to consult with the board in the exercise of these responsibilities.

An individual holding a license from a federal enclave (Indian reservation) no longer automatically qualifies the individual for a state license without meeting other qualifications specified in the denturist practice act.

Sections 18 through 25 take effect immediately.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The Secretary of Health shall review and coordinate proposed board rules for their effect on health policy and practices. The Secretary of Health is established as the licensing and disciplining authority under the denturist practice act, in consultation with the Board of Denture Technology.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed except for sections 18 through 25 which take effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** This act allows the professional boards to utilize national examinations for qualifying applicants for licensure. The transfer of the authority to license denturists from the denturist board to the Secretary will remove any apparent conflicts of interest between denturist members of the board who must license themselves as well as other denturists. The statutory recognition accorded licenses obtained on the Nooksack Indian reservation is not warranted because of alleged irregularities and the questionable circumstances under which the examination was administered, apparent conflicts of interest of the chairman of the board as the

licensing authority for the Nooksack, and the refusal to allow state investigators to verify examination records.

**Testimony Against:** The examination of state residents for licenses on the Nooksack reservation was bona fide. This examination is a good measure of the knowledge and competency for practicing dentistry. The allegations of improprieties are not proven.

**Testified:** Ron Weaver, Department of Health.