

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5635

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 12, 1993

**Brief Description:** Modifying procedures regarding disclosure of address of a health professional subject to a disciplinary complaint.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Niemi and Talmadge

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Deccio, Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, McDonald, Moyer, Niemi, Prentice, Quigley, Sheldon, L. Smith, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Scott Plack (786-7409)

**Hearing Dates:** March 2, 1993

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**

**BACKGROUND:**

Individuals seeking or renewing a health professional credential must provide the Department of Health with a mailing address. The application and renewal forms used in collecting this information are considered public documents and subject to public inspection and copying. Many health care professionals may be unaware that this information is available to the public.

When a person files a complaint against a credential holder, the disciplinary authority may communicate in writing with the person about the status or disposition of the complaint. Some of these communications have included the home address of the credential holder. There is concern that disclosure of such information makes it easier for a person filing a complaint to locate and harass a credential holder at his or her home.

**SUMMARY:**

All health professional disciplinary authorities are forbidden from including the address of a credential holder on any written communication with persons filing a complaint against a credential holder. The credentialing authorities for the health professions are required to inform all persons applying or renewing a credential that the address they provide on the application or renewal form may be disclosed to the public.

The public record disclosure statutes are amended to allow a credential holder to request that his or her home address and

phone number not be released to the public provided they supply the Department of Health with an accurate business address and phone number.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The provisions of the bill will help safeguard health care professionals, such as counselors, from irate or mentally disturbed patients. Harassment of counselors by such patients is not infrequent and no statutory protections exist to guard the counselor from the patient obtaining the counselor's home address and phone number.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Ron Weaver, Department of Health (pro); Susan Moores; Marsha T. Macy, Washington Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

The disciplinary boards and DOH must not release a license holder's social security number to the public. This information may be released to government agencies and disciplinary, investigative and examining organizations. After January 1, 1995, the boards and DOH shall withhold from public disclosure all license holders' residential address and phone number if they supply a business address and phone. An emergency clause is added.