

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5976

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As Passed Senate, March 14, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to the use of the title of nurse as a professionally licensed designation.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying who may legally use the title "nurse."

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Deccio, Wojahn, Wood, Prentice, Franklin, Heavey, McAuliffe, Kline, Patterson, Thibaudeau and Kohl).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/25/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].  
Passed Senate, 3/14/97, 46-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5976 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Franklin, Strannigan and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Rhoda Jones (786-7198)

**Background:** It is unlawful for someone to practice or offer to practice as a registered nurse unless the person has been licensed under the laws of the state. Registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses may call themselves "nurse" under current law.

In practice, nursing assistants, and other health care practitioners who work in offices, clinics, hospitals, and in community care, call themselves "nurse" when introducing themselves to consumers.

There is concern that these practitioners are being seen as registered nurses and that consumers should not be misled.

**Summary of Bill:** It is unlawful to use the title "nurse" in this state unless the person is licensed as a registered nurse, a nurse practitioner, or a licensed practical nurse.

Christian Science nurses may call themselves nurses.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This is a consumer protection bill. Consumers should not be misled by persons calling themselves nurses when they are not licensed in that profession.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Nurses Association (pro).