

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5966

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Increasing the supply of dentists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Deccio and Winsley).

**Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care**  
**House Committee on Health Care**

**Background:** There is concern that there is a shortage of dental providers in Washington hindering access to dental care. It is estimated that half of all practicing dentists will retire over the next decade. The University of Washington School of Dentistry is one of only eight dental schools in the western United States, and the only nearby school for dental students living in Alaska, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

There is also concern that licensing restrictions discourage dental providers from coming into this state to practice.

**Summary:** The Washington State Dental Quality Assurance Commission no longer must determine that another state's licensing standards are substantively equivalent to the standards in Washington. Rather, a dentist licensed in another state may be granted a Washington license without examination if he or she is a graduate of a dental school approved by the commission under current law.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48 0
House	96 0

**Effective:** July 27, 2003