

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5966

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, March 5, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to increasing the supply of dentists and dental hygienists to meet the critical shortage of dental providers in this state and underserved areas.

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

**Sponsors:** Senators Deccio and Winsley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 3/5/03 [DPS].

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

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5966 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

**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 of Substitute Bill:** 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.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill removes the provisions of the original bill pertaining to dental hygienists. The substitute also clarifies that a dentist licensed and practicing 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.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill removes barriers that prevent dentists from other states from practicing in Washington.

**Testimony Against:** The original bill was problematic because of the sections regarding dental hygienists.

**Testified:** Melissa Johnson, WA State Dental Hygienists Assn. (con original); Linda Hull, Washington State Dental Assn. (pro); Major Mike Behnen, U.S. Army Dental Corps (pro); Patty Hayes, DOH (pro sub).