

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5369

As Passed Senate, March 5, 2009

Title: An act relating to adding and deleting counseling professions subject to the authority of the secretary of health under the uniform disciplinary act.

Brief Description: Regarding counseling professions subject to the authority of the secretary of health.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Becker, Fairley, Keiser, Marr, Murray, Kohl-Welles and Parlette; by request of Department of Health).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/22/09, 1/26/09 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/05/09, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5369 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: In 2006 and 2007 the Department of Health (DOH) reviewed the profession of licensed counselor to determine the appropriate level of regulation. Recommendations were made in a department report in 2006 and a work group report published in November 2007. The Legislature passed 2SHB 2674 which required registered counselors (many of whom were already working towards another licensed credential) to obtain another newly created health profession credential by July 2010 when the registered counselor credential was eliminated. The new category of health professionals this bill created include agency affiliated counselor, certified counselor, certified advisers, as well as associate level and trainee credentials for some existing counseling professions. Requirements were established for education, experience, scope of practice, and disclosure. The Secretary of DOH had authority for discipline and licensing of registered counselors. Although the former category of registered counselor will be discontinued and no longer require regulation, the newly

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created categories of health professional will need to be regulated. 2SHB 2674 did not address the authority to regulate these newly created health professions.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Secretary of DOH is given the authority under the Uniform Disciplinary Act to regulate the newly created health professions created by the Legislature in 2008. The health professions are agency affiliated counselors, certified counselors, certified advisers, associates in mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy and social work, and trainees in the chemical dependency profession. Regulation includes licensing, enforcement of the law, and discipline.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This bill corrects an omission in the bill passed last year, it regulates the new professions created.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Karen Jensen, Department of Health.