

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6328

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to the creation of a retired active license for mental health professionals.

Brief Description: Authorizing creation of a retired active license for mental health professionals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Conway, Hargrove, Regala, Harper, Stevens and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/16/12, 2/20/12 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Directs the Secretary of Health to adopt rules to issue retired active licenses to mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, advanced social workers, and independent clinical social workers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jinkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Clibborn, Green, Harris, Kelley, Moeller and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Secretary of Health (Secretary) has regulatory authority for mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers. The Secretary establishes licensing,

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

education, and examination standards; issues licenses; and serves as the disciplining authority in cases regarding unprofessional conduct involving these professions.

The Secretary and the 15 health professions boards and commissions may adopt rules to authorize the issuance of retired active credentials to health care providers who only practice in emergent or intermittent circumstances. The Secretary's rules for retired active credentials require that the applicant hold an active credential in good standing and either not practice for more than 90 days per year or only practice in emergency situations. An applicant for a retired active credential must meet any continuing education or continuing competency requirements associated with the profession. Retired active credential holders are charged a reduced renewal fee.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Secretary of Health is directed to adopt rules to issue retired active licenses to mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, advanced social workers, and independent clinical social workers.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill removes the eligibility for mental health professionals with an expired license to obtain a retired active license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Mental health professionals would like to be able to help in disaster situations. This bill is simply trying to use retired mental health professionals as resources. The Department of Health has been reluctant to adopt a retired active credential because of the current moratorium on rulemaking.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Conway, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.