

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2648

As of February 17, 2012

Title: An act relating to the additional surcharge imposed on registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Brief Description: Removing the expiration for the additional surcharge imposed on registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health & Human Services Appropriations & Oversight (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Dickerson, Green and Kenney).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/12, 79-18.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/16/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Veronica Warnock (786-7490)

Background: In 2005 legislation was enacted authorizing a \$5 surcharge through June 30, 2013, on annual license fees for registered nurses and licensed practical. The proceeds from the surcharge are used to provide grants to a nonprofit Central Nursing Resource Center that comprises, and is led by, nurses. These grants are administered by the Department of Health (DOH), who, in consultation with the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, may provide grants for activities related to maintaining information on supply and demand of nurses; monitoring trends in the applicant pool for nursing program; facilitating partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession; evaluating the effectiveness of nursing education; promoting strategies to ensure a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace environment for nurses; and educating the public about careers and opportunities in nursing. Since 2005 over \$2.7 million has been awarded to the nursing resource center for grant activities.

As required by the 2005 legislation, the Central Nursing Resource Center submitted a report to the Legislature on November 30, 2011. DOH must conduct a review of the effectiveness of the grant program and make a recommendation as to whether it should continue by June 30, 2012.

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.

Summary of Bill: The expiration date for the \$5 surcharge on annual license fees for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses is removed from statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill removes the sunset on the licensing surcharge. The Washington Center for Nursing is doing what was intend with the proceeds from the surcharge and should be enabled to continue to do so. The center has engaged all the relevant parties in addressing the nursing shortage in Washington State and has been able to put together the funding to conduct needed research. Nurses would like to continue to pay the surcharge and support the activities of the center.

OTHER: The Washington Center for Nursing has completed work streamlining education, developing the nursing workforce, and creating transitions to higher levels of credentialing. There is more work ahead to address the need for a health care workforce that can care for our growing population, create smoother transitions up the career ladder, strengthen work in long-term care, and provide residencies for nurses in more diverse settings. This bill will make that work possible.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Cody, prime sponsor; Ellie Menzies, Service Employees International Union Healthcare 1199 NW; Sharon Ness, Unified Food and Comercial Workers 141; Tamara Warnke, Washington State Nurses Association, ARNPs United of WA.

OTHER: Linda Tieman, Washington Center for Nursing.