

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R1774 CAS-D

S.B. 132
By: Nelson
Education
3/24/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas has a nursing shortage that will only worsen with time unless steps are taken to address the problem. The nurse median age in Texas is 46, and Texas' nursing schools are not graduating enough students to fill the demand. Only 65 percent of enrolled nursing students actually graduate, and there are not enough qualified nursing instructors to sufficiently increase enrollment in nursing programs. The average entering class size of registered nurse (RN) programs increased 108 percent from 1999 to 2003 while the faculty for these programs increased by only 13 percent.

As proposed, S.B. 132 seeks to give nursing schools the tools to address the nursing shortage. This bill sets statewide goals for increasing the number of initial RN graduates, developing strategies for increasing graduation rates from nursing programs, and promoting innovation in nursing education through the regionalization of common administrative and instructional functions, interdisciplinary instruction, pooled or shared faculty, and new clinical instruction models to maximize use of existing resources and faculty.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0812, as follows:

Sec. 61.0812. GOALS AND STRATEGIES CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF GRADUATES FROM PROFESSIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS. (a) Defines "professional nursing program."

(b) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in consultation with the Department of State Health Services, not later than March 1, 2006, to develop a model to assist THECB in determining for each academic year a target number of graduates from the state's professional nursing programs, goals for increasing the number of these graduates, and the levels of public and private funding needed to achieve the target number and goals. Provides that the model must be designed to make certain short-term and long-term projections.

(c) Requires THECB to identify, develop, and study strategies for increasing graduation rates from professional nursing programs to meet THECB's graduation goals, including strategies reported to THECB by institutions of higher education under Section 61.9626 (Annual Report) and to determine which of those strategies are likely to be effective.

(d) Requires THECB, not later than January 1, 2007, to report to the legislature regarding the completion of the model under Subsection (b) and the results of the study under Subsection (c). Requires the report to include THECB's recommendations for implementing effective strategies for increasing graduation rates from professional nursing programs in the state.

(e) Provides that this section expires June 1, 2007.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.9623(a), Education Code, to include identifying, developing, or implementing innovative methods to make the most effective use of limited professional nursing program faculty, instructional or clinical space, or certain other resources among acceptable expenditure of a grant from the professional nursing shortage reduction program to a professional nursing program or other entity involved with a professional nursing program in the preparation of students for initial licensure as registered nurses.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 61.9624, Education Code, to delete text regarding THECB adopting regulations for the administration of the professional nursing shortage program and to make conforming changes.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 61.9626(a), Education Code, to include the capacity of the program, either alone or in cooperation with one or more other programs, to graduate more students prepared for licensure as registered nurses within the necessary information in the required annual report provided by each higher educational institution with a professional nursing program to THECB.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.