

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1227
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas is home to over 100 accredited nursing schools and twice as many nursing education programs. Few of these facilities can be found in rural areas. Currently, the application process to open a new school in Texas takes roughly a year to complete. The process is filled with laborious steps that add unnecessary burden to schools are that hoping to expand into rural areas. This process includes gathering letters of support from community stakeholders and demonstrating that the need for a new program in the area is apparent.

In addition to this, there are other boundaries in place even after a school has been approved. For starters, the approval is only granted provisionally. This means that the school's enrollments are limited until it can demonstrate an 80 percent first-time licensure rate during its first year of operation. For smaller or more rural schools with lower populations, this requirement makes it difficult for them to establish themselves.

Texas strives to ensure that all nurses in the state are competent to practice safely, hoping to advance the profession through collaboration, innovation, and leadership. With the nursing shortage that is seen throughout Texas and the nation, there should not be unnecessary red tape that prevents new nursing programs from opening and expanding, especially in rural areas where the shortages are most apparent.

S.B. 1227 removes some of the requirements that may delay or entirely deter the approval and operation of vocational nursing education programs. These include:

- Removing the requirement for applicants to submit letters of support from community stakeholders for the proposed program.
- Removing the provisional limit on enrollment from initially approved programs.
- Removing the 80 percent first-time licensure requirement and instead changing it to 70 percent for the first two applicable years, then to a 80 percent final licensure rate.

S.B. 1227 also allows school systems with multiple campuses to combine licensure examination passage rates of graduates from all campuses when determining a program's annual passage rate.

As proposed, S.B. 1227 amends current law relating to the approval and operation of vocational nursing educational programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Board of Nursing is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 301.1575, Occupations Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 301, Occupations Code, by adding Section 301.1575, as follows:

Sec. 301.1575. APPROVAL AND OPERATION OF VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. Prohibits the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) from adopting a rule applicable to the approval or operation of a vocational nursing educational program that:

- (1) requires the applicant to submit, as part of the application for approval, letters in support of the program's proposed operation in the community;
- (2) requires initial approval to be on a provisional basis;
- (3) imposes a limit on enrollment;
- (4) requires the program to have a licensing examination passage rate that exceeds:
 - (A) 80 percent for the first two academic years for which graduates are eligible to take the licensing examination; or
 - (B) 70 percent for any subsequent academic year; or
- (5) prohibits a program with more than one campus from combining licensing examination passage rates for graduates from all campuses when determining the program's passage rate for an academic year.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2023.