

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 132
By: Nelson
Higher Education
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

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.

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

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 105, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 105.008, as follows:

Sec. 105.008. GOALS AND STRATEGIES CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF GRADUATES FROM PROFESSIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS. (a) Defines "professional nursing program."

(b) Requires the Statewide Health Coordinating Council (council), in consultation with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), to perform an analysis to determine, for each academic year, a target number of graduates from the state's professional nursing programs, goals for increasing the number of graduates from those programs, and the levels of public and private funding needed to achieve the target number and goals. Requires the analysis to include certain assessments and projections.

(c) Requires the council to report to the legislature concerning the results of the analysis under Subsection (b), no later than January 1, 2007.

(d) Requires the council to use existing resources to perform duties imposed under this section.

(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 as well as assuring the recruitment and retention of an adequate number of qualified faculty among

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acceptable expenditures 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 institution with a professional nursing program to THECB.

SECTION 5. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.96261, as follows:

Sec. 61.96261. STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING GRADUATION RATES. (a) Sets forth certain requirements of THECB pertaining to strategies for increasing graduation rates from professional nursing programs.

(b) Requires THECB to report to the legislature concerning the results of the study conducted under Subsection (a) no later than January 1, 2007. Requires the report to include THECB's recommendations for implementing effective strategies for increasing graduation rates from professional nursing programs.

(c) Requires THECB to use existing resources to perform duties imposed under this section.

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

SECTION 6. Effective date:

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1 provides incentives to promote recruiting and retaining professional nursing program faculty members through grants and programs; providing more competitive and rewarding compensation and tuition exemptions and assistance for first time home buyers.