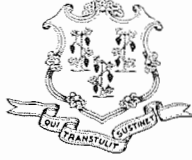


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

M. Jodi Rell
Governor

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY November 27, 2007

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Criminal Justice Reform Proposal #13 - An Act Concerning Nursing Staff at Correctional Facilities and Other State-Operated Institutions.

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to Proposal #13, An Act Concerning Nursing Staff at Correctional Facilities and Other State-Operated Institutions.

This legislation would provide funding for the Department of Public Health to establish and administer a loan forgiveness program for registered nurse; provides funding for the purposes of accelerated re-licensure of nurses who have left the workforce and whose licenses have expired; and funding for developing and implementing an advertising campaign to recruit to work at state-operated institutions.

Should the Department of Public Health be appropriated the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars to establish this a loan forgiveness program for registered nurses, funding will be utilized to adopt regulations to establish procedures to administer this program; and develop, negotiate and monitor an estimated 30 contracts associated with the loan forgiveness program annually for a period of five years. In addition, should the Department be appropriated the sum of two hundred thousand for the purposes of developing and implementing an advertising campaign to recruit nurses to work at state operated institutions. The Department will utilize the funding to create media promotional campaigns, which will highlight the program along with coordinating recruitment efforts with Schools of Medicine, Nursing Programs, Community College programs, academia leadership, state agencies, and national accreditation programs. There will be an administrative impact to the department that is not budgeted for either initiative, particularly in the area of staff time to implement the requirements.

Should the Department of Public Health be appropriated the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars for the purposes of accelerated re-licensure of nurses who have left the workforce and whose licenses have expired. The Department has outlined two potential options for the use of this funding as follows:

- The regulations of Connecticut State Agencies outline the process for reinstatement of a lapsed license. Nurses who have been out of the active clinical practice of nursing for more than three years are required to take a refresher program. Nurses who have been out of the active clinical practice of nursing for more than five years are required to re-take the licensure examination in addition to the refresher course. The cost of a refresher program is approximately \$2,200.00, including uniforms and equipment. The cost of retaking the licensure examination is \$200.00. If this funding were to be used to assist nurses in completing a refresher course and the examination, the \$250,000.00 would provide funding to assist approximately 100 nurses to get re-licensed.
- The second option is to provide funding to educational institutions to offer additional refresher courses.

The department supports efforts to enhance the availability of nurses in the workforce, including at state facilities. The nursing shortage is an issue that has generated much discussion among the members of the Governor's Hospital Task Force, and is the focus of several draft recommendations by the Workforce Subcommittee. While the final recommendations will not be provided to the Governor before the end of 2007, the draft recommendations are available on the OHCA website at the following URL: <http://www.ct.gov/ohca/cwp/view.asp?a=3192&q=393022>

It is also important to note that in many of the areas above, there are other state agencies that may have similar programs already in place, specifically in the areas of loan repayment and recruitment. Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.



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