

Konrad Jackson

From: beth gartner <b_gartner@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 05, 2014 10:59 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: SB 166 needs a hearing please
Attachments: house labor and commerce support letter SB 166.doc

Dear Representative Olson ,

SB 166 is a bill that updates the current practice of the Board of Nursing. This bill without any amendments is a bill that is supported by the Board of Nursing, the Alaska Nurses Association and the Professional Nurses of Alaska. The Board of Nursing is responsible for almost 14,000 licensees in the State of Alaska.

Attached is a letter that details possible entities that may attempt to request an amendment and reasons not to permit this activity to occur.

I am asking for a clean SB 166 to pass from the House Labor and Commerce Committee.

If further information is needed please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Beth Gartner Farnstrom RN

Beth Farnstrom, RN
Alaska State Board of Nursing
Chair
b_gartner@yahoo.com

Reasons not to accept possible amendments on SB 166

The Board knows that the nursing statute has not been opened in over 10 years and other parties may want to attempt an amendment. While this Bill was in the Senate, there were 2 attempts to add amendments. The group called ASHNA attempted to add some wording about criminal background checks for certified nurse aides, CNAs. The board has verbally agreed to join their summit this summer to address the complete issue. Gina Edmiston, from ASHNA, talked with the Board of Nursing on April 4th during our public comment time to invite the board along with other stake holders in this issue that involves more than just CNAs. ASHNA's lobbyist, Karen Perdue, had not been aware of the summit plan. At this time ASHNA's amendment is not a permanent solution and would need to be revised in the future. The Board would like to address this issue once with a Bill in the future on this same issue.

The other entity that has tried to amend SB 166 is the Christian Science Nurses. The Board of Nursing has dealt with the Christian Scientist Nurses several times over the years about their desire to be called nurses in the State of Alaska. Nurses licensed in Alaska have met nursing educational requirements and have passed a national test. In our discussions with the Christian Scientist Church representatives, the Board's public members agreed with the professional nurses that when one hears the word nurse, they expect someone who is educated in nursing. To allow someone who is not educated as a nurse and to allow them to be called a nurse would be misleading to the public and unsafe. A Christian Scientist Nurse is not educated as a nurse. The Board respects the services of a Christian Scientist Nurse and feels there is value in the services provided to their clients but they are not nurses. Their argument states 43 other states recognize the Christian Science Nurse. Pennsylvania is a state who has ruled against recognizing them as a nurse in 2011. Nurses are recognized by the public as one of the most trusted professions. To allow someone not educated as a nurse and to call themselves a nurse would be misleading to the Alaska public. In June of 2007 the Board passed a motion that stated the Board upholds the position that we do not allow the use of the title "nurse" by persons who are not licensed under 08.68". This was stated again in October 2011 when the Board met with them on this same topic. I wrote to Alaska Attorney General Geraghty in August of 2013 about this issue. In his letter addressed to Beverly Smith, with Christian Science Committee on Publication in Alaska from Douglas, Alaska, the Attorney General supported the Board of Nursing decision through Alaska Statutes 08.68.340(a)(3) and AS 08.68.340(a)(4).

Sincere thanks for supporting SB 166 without amendments. I am sure this will be well received by the almost 14,000 licensees covered by the Board of Nursing.

Regards,

Beth Farnstrom, RN, BSN