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SENATE BILL 5335

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State of Washington                      64th Legislature                      2015 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles, and Mullet

Read first time 01/19/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to the nurse educator pay it forward program; and  
2 adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4            NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 1.**        (1) The legislature recognizes the  
5 increasing need for health care providers, including nurses, in  
6 Washington and that there is a growing demand to educate and train  
7 more nurses as well as advancing the education of current nurses. The  
8 legislature finds that there is a growing shortage of nurse educators  
9 in Washington and across the country to meet the growing demand for  
10 more educators.

11            (2) The legislature finds that due to a limited pool of prepared  
12 candidates, nursing programs in the state experience difficulty  
13 hiring and retaining qualified nursing faculty members.

14            (3) The legislature recognizes that nursing faculty positions  
15 require candidates to have at least a master's degree, while a great  
16 majority of nursing faculty programs strongly prefer that candidates  
17 hold a doctoral degree. The expensive upfront cost of tuition for  
18 master's and doctoral degree programs can be a significant barrier to  
19 registered nurses seeking to advance their education to become  
20 nursing faculty members. Therefore, the legislature recognizes that  
21 it is in the state's interest to develop a pay it forward program for

1 nurse educators to assist registered nurses in becoming nursing  
2 faculty members.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
4 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
5 otherwise.

6 (1) "Council" means the student achievement council.

7 (2) "Full-time work" means the definition of full-time as defined  
8 by the Washington nursing education program in which the participant  
9 is employed.

10 (3) "Nurse educator" means a registered nurse who holds a  
11 graduate degree in nursing or related field and is responsible for  
12 designing, implementing, and evaluating curricula for nursing  
13 students in the classroom and clinical settings.

14 (4) "Nursing commission" means the Washington state nursing  
15 commission.

16 (5) "Pay it forward" means a financing model that allows students  
17 to return to college without upfront payments as long as a  
18 contractual requirement is signed that requires the student to pay a  
19 portion of his or her income for a set period of time and meet a  
20 service requirement as repayment six months after graduating.

21 (6) "Qualifying program" means the program must be accredited by  
22 a nationally recognized accrediting agency and be one of the  
23 following:

24 (a) A master's degree program in nursing or nursing science;

25 (b) A doctor of philosophy program in nursing or any related  
26 field;

27 (c) A doctor of education program in nursing or any related  
28 field;

29 (d) A doctor of nursing practice program; or

30 (e) A doctor of nursing science program.

31 (7) "Service requirement" means five years of full-time work as a  
32 nurse educator in a Washington nursing education program that is  
33 accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The nurse educator pay it forward  
35 program is created for the purpose of providing greater access to  
36 higher education for registered nurses pursuing careers as nurse  
37 educators. The nurse educator pay it forward program shall be  
38 developed and implemented by the council in collaboration with the

1 nursing commission. In administering the program, the council may  
2 adopt necessary rules and guidelines. In considering the rules and  
3 guidelines, the council shall include rules or exceptions as are  
4 necessary to address hardship cases or extenuating circumstances.

5 (2) Eligible students who choose to participate in the nurse  
6 educator pay it forward program and who are enrolled in a qualifying  
7 program at an institution of higher education in Washington shall  
8 receive funds for its qualifying program's tuition and fees, less any  
9 awards the student may receive through financial aid excluding  
10 student loans and work-study. These funds shall be distributed by the  
11 council to the student's institution of higher education in the name  
12 of the student.

13 (a) The nurse educator pay it forward program shall be available  
14 for up to fifty full-time equivalent slots per year at qualifying  
15 programs. The council shall develop an application for participation  
16 and determine a method for choosing participants should the number of  
17 applications exceed the program capacity of fifty full-time  
18 equivalents per year.

19 (b) Students are eligible to participate in the nurse educator  
20 pay it forward program for up to the equivalent of five academic  
21 years at full-time enrollment while maintaining satisfactory academic  
22 progress for financial aid purposes.

23 (c) Students attending private institutions of higher education  
24 are entitled to participate in the nurse educator pay it forward  
25 program. They are eligible to receive up to the portion of their  
26 tuition and fees that is equivalent to the tuition and fees at the  
27 most expensive institution of higher education as defined in RCW  
28 28B.10.016 for an equivalent qualifying program.

29 (3) Students choosing to participate in the nurse educator pay it  
30 forward program shall sign a binding contract obligating them to make  
31 contributions to the nurse educator pay it forward account created in  
32 section 4 of this act. Nurse educator pay it forward program  
33 participants shall start making contributions six months following  
34 graduation or discontinuation of their postsecondary program. The  
35 amount participants are required to contribute and the length of time  
36 participants are required to contribute must be determined by the  
37 council in collaboration with the nursing commission and within the  
38 parameters of this subsection.

1 (a) Before January 1st of each year, the council shall seek to  
2 set contribution rates for the upcoming academic year's cohort based  
3 on the following:

4 (i) For participants who have all of their qualifying program  
5 credits financed through the nurse educator pay it forward program,  
6 the council and the nursing commission shall seek to set the  
7 contribution rate between three and eight percent of participants'  
8 income;

9 (ii) Within a cohort, each individual participant's contribution  
10 rate shall be prorated according to the proportion of total credits,  
11 or equivalent, that the nurse educator pay it forward program funded  
12 for the participant.

13 (b) Before January 1st of each year, the council shall seek to  
14 set the contribution period for the upcoming academic year's cohort  
15 between ten and fifteen years following graduation or upon leaving  
16 the institution of higher education, with the exception of  
17 participants who do not meet their service requirement described in  
18 subsection (5) of this section. Notwithstanding the service  
19 requirement, participants shall not be required to make contributions  
20 for a period longer than twenty years.

21 (4) Students eligible to participate are students enrolled in a  
22 qualifying program, who are also participating in a nurse educator  
23 track or nurse educator certificate program, if offered, and, if no  
24 such track or program is offered, who plan to become employed as  
25 nurse educators as a result of their participation in the qualifying  
26 program.

27 (5) All participants in the nurse educator pay it forward program  
28 shall, within their contribution period, complete the equivalent of  
29 five years of full-time work as a nurse educator to meet the service  
30 requirement for the nurse educator pay it forward program. If, by the  
31 end of the original contribution period, a participant has not  
32 completed the equivalent of five years of full-time work as a nurse  
33 educator, the participant is required to continue contributions until  
34 the service requirement is met, not to exceed a maximum contribution  
35 period of twenty years.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The nurse educator pay it forward  
37 account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. The primary  
38 purpose of the account is for disbursements to participants in the  
39 nurse educator pay it forward program created in section 3 of this

1 act, and for the receipt of pay it forward contributions from  
2 participants, as provided in subsection (2) of this section.

3 (2) All receipts from the nurse educator pay it forward program  
4 under section 3 of this act must be deposited in the account. The  
5 account shall consist of funds appropriated by the legislature for  
6 the nurse educator pay it forward program, contributions to the nurse  
7 educator pay it forward program by nurse educator pay it forward  
8 participants, and private contributions, including principal and  
9 interest. Moneys deposited in the account do not lapse at the close  
10 of the fiscal period for which they were appropriated. Both during  
11 and after the fiscal period in which moneys were deposited in the  
12 account, the council may expend moneys in the account only for the  
13 purposes of the nurse educator pay it forward program.

14 (3) Expenditures from the account may be used only for the nurse  
15 educator pay it forward program according to the program's rules and  
16 policies.

17 (4) Only the council may authorize expenditures from the account.

18 (5) Disbursements from the account are exempt from appropriations  
19 and the allotment provisions of chapter 43.88 RCW.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The nurse educator pay it forward program  
21 disbursements are established subject to appropriations. The council  
22 shall establish the program within existing funds.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act  
24 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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