

Senate Bill No. 466

CHAPTER 489

An act to amend Sections 2701, 2708, and 2786 of, to add Sections 2718 and 2786.1 to, and to repeal Section 2736.5 of, the Business and Professions Code, relating to nursing.

[Approved by Governor October 4, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State October 4, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 466, Hill. Registered nurses: Board of Registered Nursing.

The Nursing Practice Act provides for the licensure and regulation of registered nurses by the Board of Registered Nursing within the Department of Consumer Affairs. Existing law requires the board to appoint an executive officer to perform duties delegated by the board. Existing law repeals those provisions establishing the board and the executive officer position on January 1, 2016.

This bill would extend the repeal date to January 1, 2018.

The act authorizes the board to take disciplinary action against a certified or licensed nurse or to deny an application for a certificate or license for certain reasons, including unprofessional conduct. Existing law establishes the California State Auditor's Office, which is headed by the California State Auditor, to conduct financial and performance audits as directed by statute.

This bill would require the board, by February 1, 2016, to contract with the California State Auditor's Office to conduct a performance audit of the board's enforcement program, as specified. The bill would require the board to reimburse the office for the cost of the performance audit. The bill would require the office to report the results of the audit to the Governor, the department, and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature by January 1, 2017. The bill would require the board's staff and management to cooperate with the office and provide the office with access to data, case files, employees, and information.

The act authorizes any person who has served on active duty in the medical corps of the Armed Forces of the United States and who successfully completed the course of instruction to qualify him or her for rating as a medical service technician—independent duty, or other equivalent rating, and whose service in the Armed Forces was under honorable conditions to submit the record of that training to the board for evaluation. The act requires the board to grant a license to that person if he or she meets specified qualifications and the board determines that his or her education would give reasonable assurance of competence to practice as a registered nurse in this

state. The act requires the board to maintain records of those applicants, including, but not limited to, applicants who are rejected from examination.

This bill would repeal those provisions.

The act requires the board to maintain a list of approved schools or programs of nursing in this state, as specified, and provides that an approved school or program of nursing is one that has been approved by the board and meets certain academic requirements. The act requires the board to deny an application for approval of, and to revoke the approval given to, any school of nursing that does not give student applicants credit for previous education and the opportunity to obtain credit for other acquired knowledge by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation.

This bill would require the board to deny or revoke approval of a school of nursing that does not give student applicants credit in the field of nursing for military education and experience by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation. The bill would require the board, by January 1, 2017, to adopt regulations requiring schools seeking approval to have a process to evaluate and grant credit, as defined, for military education and experience. The bill would require the board to review a school's policies and practices regarding granting credit for military education and experience at least once every 5 years to ensure consistency in evaluation and application across schools. The bill would require the board to post on its Internet Web site information related to the acceptance of military coursework and experience at each approved school.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 2701 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

2701. (a) There is in the Department of Consumer Affairs the Board of Registered Nursing consisting of nine members.

(b) For purposes of this chapter, "board," or "the board," refers to the Board of Registered Nursing. Any reference in state law to the Board of Nurse Examiners of the State of California or the California Board of Nursing Education and Nurse Registration shall be construed to refer to the Board of Registered Nursing.

(c) The board shall have all authority vested in the previous board under this chapter. The board may enforce all disciplinary actions undertaken by the previous board.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2018, and as of that date, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute that is enacted before January 1, 2018, deletes or extends that date. Notwithstanding any other law, the repeal of this section renders the board subject to review by the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature.

SEC. 2. Section 2708 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

2708. (a) The board shall appoint an executive officer who shall perform the duties delegated by the board and who shall be responsible to it for the accomplishment of those duties.

(b) The executive officer shall be a nurse currently licensed under this chapter and shall possess other qualifications as determined by the board.

(c) The executive officer shall not be a member of the board.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2018, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2018, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 3. Section 2718 is added to the Business and Professions Code, to read:

2718. (a) (1) By February 1, 2016, the board shall contract with the office to conduct a performance audit of the board's enforcement program. The board shall reimburse the office for the cost of the performance audit. The office shall report the results of the audit, with any recommendations, to the Governor, the department, and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature by January 1, 2017.

(2) The performance audit shall include, but not be limited to, an evaluation of all the following:

(A) The quality and consistency of, and compliance with, complaint processing and investigation.

(B) The consistency and adequacy of the application of board sanctions or discipline imposed on licensees.

(C) The accuracy and consistency in implementing the laws and rules affecting discipline, including adherence to the Division of Investigation Case Acceptance Guidelines (Consumer Protection Enforcement Initiative Model), as revised July 1, 2014.

(D) The timeframes for completing complaint processing, investigation, and resolution.

(E) Staff concerns regarding licensee disciplinary matters or procedures.

(F) The appropriate utilization of licensed professionals to investigate complaints.

(G) The adequacy of the board's cooperation with other state agencies charged with enforcing related laws and regulations regarding nurses.

(H) Any existing backlog, the reason for the backlog, and the timeframe for eliminating the backlog.

(I) The adequacy of board staffing, training, and fiscal resources to perform its enforcement functions.

(b) Board staff and management shall cooperate with the office and shall provide the office with access to data, case files, employees, and information as the office may, in its discretion, require for the purposes of this section.

(c) For the purposes of this section, "office" means the California State Auditor's Office.

SEC. 4. Section 2736.5 of the Business and Professions Code is repealed.

SEC. 5. Section 2786 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

2786. (a) An approved school of nursing, or an approved nursing program, is one that has been approved by the board, gives the course of instruction approved by the board, covering not less than two academic years, is affiliated or conducted in connection with one or more hospitals, and is an institution of higher education. For purposes of this section, “institution of higher education” includes, but is not limited to, community colleges offering an associate of arts or associate of science degree and private postsecondary institutions offering an associate of arts, associate of science, or baccalaureate degree or an entry-level master’s degree, and is an institution that is not subject to the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 94800) of Part 59 of Division 10 of Title 3 of the Education Code).

(b) A school of nursing that is affiliated with an institution that is subject to the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 94800) of Part 59 of Division 10 of Title 3 of the Education Code), may be approved by the board to grant an associate of arts or associate of science degree to individuals who graduate from the school of nursing or to grant a baccalaureate degree in nursing with successful completion of an additional course of study as approved by the board and the institution involved.

(c) The board shall determine by regulation the required subjects of instruction to be completed in an approved school of nursing for licensure as a registered nurse and shall include the minimum units of theory and clinical experience necessary to achieve essential clinical competency at the entry level of the registered nurse. The board’s regulations shall be designed to require all schools to provide clinical instruction in all phases of the educational process, except as necessary to accommodate military education and experience as specified in Section 2786.1.

(d) The board shall perform or cause to be performed an analysis of the practice of the registered nurse no less than every five years. Results of the analysis shall be utilized to assist in the determination of the required subjects of instruction, validation of the licensing examination, and assessment of the current practice of nursing.

SEC. 6. Section 2786.1 is added to the Business and Professions Code, to read:

2786.1. (a) The board shall deny the application for approval made by, and shall revoke the approval given to, any school of nursing that does not give student applicants credit in the field of nursing for military education and experience by the use of challenge examinations or other methods of evaluation.

(b) The board shall adopt regulations by January 1, 2017, requiring schools to have a process to evaluate and grant credit for military education and experience. The regulations shall be adopted pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code). The word “credit,” as used in this subdivision, is limited to credit for licensure

only. The board is not authorized to prescribe the credit that an approved school of nursing shall give toward an academic certificate or degree.

(c) The board shall review a school's policies and practices regarding granting credit for military education and experience at least once every five years to ensure consistency in evaluation and application across schools. The board shall post on its Internet Web site information related to the acceptance of military coursework and experience at each approved school.