

Connecticut League  
for Nursing

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Good morning Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

For the record, I am Marcia Proto, Co-Executive Director for the Connecticut League for Nursing. On behalf of the Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN), please allow this testimony to support House Bill 5024, "An Act Concerning an Education Doctoral Degree Program in Nursing Education" which would allow the creation of an Ed.D. Program in *Nursing Education*.

The importance of this proposal is that it differentiates from the current offerings by the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) that offer a doctoral program for the purpose of "preparing personnel for the public schools of the state" by expanding the Ed.D. options with a program solely focused on "preparing personnel for the role of nursing faculty."

Due to state regulations and guidelines combined with policies and practices of colleges and universities, qualifications for a nursing faculty position dictate that a doctoral degree is preferred if not mandated for employment. Without a doctoral credential, a nurse educator would not be qualified to secure employment.

The limited supply of doctoral prepared nurses has created a significant problem for programs of nursing not only in Connecticut but around the country, in that programs cannot expand their enrollments. This lack of expansion contributes greatly to the shortages that are currently being experienced in the availability of Registered Nurses; and with projected retirements over the next three to five years, Connecticut will find itself in a very challenging position to meet employment demands.

This proposed Ed.D. in Nursing Education program will be the only one of its kind in Connecticut and one of very few programs across the country. This program, similar to the Ed.D. in nursing offered by Teachers' College of Columbia University, combines research, content knowledge and practical expertise that is not available to students completing most existing doctoral programs in nursing (i.e., Ph.D. and D.N.P. programs).

Most doctoral programs in nursing are not designed specifically to the preparation of nursing faculty, and many utilize their doctoral credentials to provide leadership within healthcare facilities or consulting in the private sector. This factor lessens the likelihood of retaining these educators and makes it more difficult for those who select the academic path to fully impact the education of an increasingly diverse population of future nurses.

In Connecticut, current data indicates that 15% of all faculty at all levels of nursing education teaching in our nursing programs are expected to retire within the next three to five years. On a national basis, nurse faculty vacancy rates are approximated at 7.6% which translates into approximately 1.8 faculty vacancies per school. Most of the vacancies (88.1%) were faculty positions requiring or preferring a doctoral degree.

This data suggest that we do not have “bucket” of credentialed nurses that Connecticut can “attract” to fill our vacancies, but a systemic issue that can cripple the pipeline for producing trained nurses to deliver quality patient care.

CLN strongly supports expansion and growth of all existing programs to meet the education needs within the nursing profession to insure that our Connecticut residents have access to high quality patient care services provided by highly skilled nursing professionals. For more information, please contact me at 203-494-1121 or via email at [Marcia@ctleaguefornursing.org](mailto:Marcia@ctleaguefornursing.org).