

Connecticut Nurses Association
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TESTIMONY RE: RB 5541 AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES PROVIDED BY DENTAL
PROFESSIONALS AND CERTIFICATION FOR ADVANCED HEALTH HYGIENE PRACTICES

Public Health Committee
March 21, 2012

Good Morning Senator Gerrantana, Representative Ritter, and esteemed members of
the Public Health Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut
Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in
Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams, current chairperson of its Government
Relations Committee and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University.
I have practiced nursing for 48 years and have educated nurses in Connecticut in both
the public and private sector for over 40 years.

I am speaking in **strong opposition to Section 14 (NEW) and Section 15 Subsection of
section 19a-12 and Section 14 (NEW) and Section 15 Subsection© of Section 19a-14.**

I am speaking in opposition to the removal of Professional Boards and the replacement
of these boards by a Department of Public Health Committee "that will assume all
powers and duties normally vested with a board administering, regulatory jurisdiction
over such professions. The uniform provisions of (this chapter) sections 4-14, inclusive
of this act and chapters 368v, 369 to 381a, inclusive of 383 to 388, inclusive,
393a.395.398, 399,400a and 400c, including but not limited to, standards of entry and
renewal, grounds for professional discipline, receiving and processing complaints and

disciplinary sanctions, shall apply, except as otherwise provided by law, to the professions listed in this subsection. “

Boards: Professions are typically regulated by statute, with the responsibilities of enforcement delegated to state regulatory agencies and boards or commissions. Professions tend to be autonomous, which means they have a high degree of control of their own affairs: "Professionals are autonomous insofar as they can make independent judgments about their work" this usually means "the freedom to exercise their professional judgment

The nursing profession, as most professions, enjoys a high social status, regard and esteem which is conferred upon them by society. Nursing is viewed as the most trusted profession by the public in surveys conducted during the last eight years. This high esteem arises primarily from the higher social function of their work, which is regarded as vital to society as a whole and thus of having a special and valuable nature.

The nursing profession involves technical, specialized and highly skilled work often referred to as "**professional expertise.**" Education for this work involves obtaining degrees and professional qualifications without which entry to the profession is barred. Education also requires regular updating of knowledge and skills that facilitates the incorporation of this new knowledge in order to maintain expert competence and public safety. This is accomplished through continuing education especially at the advanced levels for continuing certification.

All professions are

1. Skill based on theoretical knowledge: Professionals are assumed to have extensive theoretical knowledge (e.g. medicine, law, nursing) and to possess skills based on that knowledge that they are able to apply in practice.

2. Professional association: Professions usually have professional bodies organized by their members, which are intended to enhance the status of their members and have carefully controlled entrance requirements.
3. Extensive period of education: The most prestigious professions usually require at least four years of university education.
4. Testing of competence: Before being admitted to membership of a professional body, there is a requirement to pass prescribed examinations that are based on mainly theoretical knowledge.
5. Institutional training: In addition to examinations, there is usually a requirement for a long period of institutionalized training where aspiring professionals acquire specified practical experience in some sort of trainee role before being recognized as a full member of a professional body. Continuous upgrading of skills through professional development is also mandatory these days.
6. Licensed practitioners: Professions seek to establish a register or membership so that only those individuals so licensed are recognized as bona fide.
7. Work autonomy: Professionals tend to retain control over their work, even when they are employed outside the profession in commercial or public organizations. They have also gained control over their own theoretical knowledge.
8. Code of professional conduct or ethics: Professional bodies usually have codes of conduct or ethics for their members and disciplinary procedures for those who infringe the rules.
9. Self-regulation: Professional bodies tend to insist that they should be self-regulating and independent from government. Professions tend to be regulated by the most highly qualified members of the profession.

Professional Boards are composed of individuals in the "Profession" who have the knowledge, education, clinical, and experiential competence essential to monitoring their profession. It is questionable practice to allow a Board to be created that does not have the qualifications and experiences needed to monitor safe practices. It is also a

resource time consuming process best accomplished by a volunteer board that does not require State resources.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD, RN