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TESTIMONY R.B. 186 An Act Concerning Licensing, Investigation and Disciplinary Processes for Physicians and Nurses

Public Health Committee
March 7, 2012

Good afternoon 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 Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University.

I am providing Testimony in opposition to changes recommended in R.B. 186, An Act Concerning Licensing, Investigation and Disciplinary Processes for Physicians and Nurses, in relation to the recommended changes to the composition of the State Board of Nurse Examiners.

The current State statute defines the composition of the State Board of Nurse Examiners the board composition was established to provide the theoretical, clinical and analytical ability essential to monitoring and regulating the profession as set forward in the scope and standards of practice of the profession.

It is essential that the members of the Board have the qualifications essential to the

role they are expected to execute in order to protect the public. The education and experience of the members of the Board need to reflect the education and practice arena of the nurses who come before them. Therefore the Board members need to be selected based on credentials other than RN licensure. I recognize it is difficult to obtain volunteers for this time consuming process. But a profession must accept its socio political responsibility for self regulation. In order for nurses in CT to step forward they must be made aware of the opportunity, role and need for their involvement in the process.

I urge you to keep the current standards and to make sure members represent the changes in the profession they monitor. I further recommend that a process be established to select and recommend members to the board utilizing the Professional Organizations and the Nursing Collaborative. If you build it they will come, but if they are unaware of the process they are unable to volunteer.

Please remember the role of the State Board of Nurse Examiners is essential to the protection of the public and in order to be effective the members of the Board must come into the process with the competencies essential to the process.

Thank you

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN

Section 20-88. State Board of Examiners for Nursing. (a) The Connecticut State Board of Examiners for Nursing shall consist of twelve members who are residents of the state to be appointed by the governor subject to the provisions of section 4-9a. The governor shall appoint two members who shall be graduates of an

approved school for licensed practical nursing; five members who shall be registered nurses, three of whom shall, at the time of appointment, be connected with an institution affording opportunities for the education of nurses, and at least two of whom shall hold master's degrees in nursing from a recognized college or university and one of whom shall be at the time of appointment an instructor in an approved school for licensed practical nurses; one member who shall be an advanced practice registered nurse; and four members who shall be public members. Members of said board shall be residents of this state and professional members shall maintain good professional standing. No member of said board shall be an elected or appointed officer of any professional association of nurses or have been such an officer during the year immediately preceding his appointment. No member shall serve more than two full consecutive terms which commence after July 1, 1980. Any vacancy shall be filled by the governor for the unexpired portion of the term. (b) The governor shall appoint a chairperson from among such members. Said board shall meet at least once during each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairman deems necessary. Special meetings shall be held on the request of a majority of the board after notice in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225. A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum. Members shall not be compensated for their services. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from office. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the board. No member shall participate in the affairs of the board during the pendency of any disciplinary proceedings by the board against such member.

Section 20-90. Duties of board. (a) Said board may adopt a seal. The Commissioner of Public Health, with advice and assistance from the board, and in consultation with the State Board of Education, shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, permitting and setting standards for courses for the training of practical nurses to be offered in high schools and vocational schools for students who have not yet acquired a high school diploma. Students who satisfactorily complete courses approved by said Board of Examiners for Nursing, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health, as meeting such standards shall be given credit for each such course toward the requirements for a practical nurse's license. All schools of nursing in this state, except such schools accredited by the National League for Nursing or other professional accrediting association approved by the United States Department of Education and recognized by the Commissioner of Public Health, and all schools for training licensed practical nurses and all hospitals connected to such schools that prepare persons for examination under the provisions of this chapter, shall be visited periodically by a representative of the Department of Public Health who shall be a registered nurse or a person experienced in the field of nursing education. The board shall keep a list of all nursing programs and all programs for training licensed practical nurses that are approved by it, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health, as maintaining the standard for the education of nurses and the training of licensed practical nurses as established by the commissioner. The board shall consult, where possible, with nationally recognized accrediting agencies when approving schools. (b) Said board shall (1) hear and decide matters concerning suspension or revocation of licensure, (2) adjudicate complaints filed against practitioners licensed under this chapter and impose sanctions where appropriate.

