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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Wednesday, February 22, 2023
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 & Via Videoconference

On the following measure:
S.B. 1323, RELATING TO THE PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING
ACT

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Licensing Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division (Division). The Department supports this administration bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) amend the Professional and Vocational Licensing Act to reduce the time frame for which an application is considered abandoned from two years to one year; and (2) specify how this one-year period applies to the process for applications for examination.

The Division has seen a higher than usual backlog of certain healthcare licensing applications. Many healthcare workers intending to be in the State on a temporary basis apply for licensure, but fail to complete the application process prior to leaving the State. Currently, applications must be held open for a period of two (2) years. This bill

reduces the amount of time an application must be held open from two (2) years to one (1) year, thereby reducing the volume of applications that the Division must treat as pending. The bill would assist the Division in directing resources to applications which require active attention, and which if further processed will ultimately result in licensure. This bill also encourages applicants to provide relevant supporting documentation in a timely manner or to complete the examination requirement in a timely manner.

For the Committee's information, the Board of Nursing alone received 1,116 applications between late-February 2021 through December 2021, that have not completed the application process. In contrast, there are 51 pending applications received between late-February 2021 through December 2021, for five other healthcare-related boards or programs. Based on the current law, the Division is required to treat these applications as pending. Should this bill be enacted, this number would be significantly reduced.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we respectfully ask the Committee to pass this administration bill.

Testimony of the Board of Nursing

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Wednesday, February 22, 2023
9:30 a.m.
Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 1323, RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Fukunaga, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Nursing (Board). The Board supports this administration bill.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Professional and Vocational Licensing Act to reduce the time frame for which an application is considered abandoned from two years to one year and to specify how this one-year period applies to the process for applications for examination.

As the Committee is aware, the Board is administratively attached to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Professional and Vocational Licensing Division (PVL). On behalf of the Board, PVL receives and processes all nurse applications. The Board currently has the highest number of applications (examination and endorsement) and licensee population. As of February 18, 2023, the Board has 3,272 pending nursing applications. Although most applicants complete the application process within a year, there is still a high percentage of applicants that do not complete it for various reasons, including their inability to pass the examination within the required number of attempts and/or they leave the State at the end of a temporary employment contract¹. Ultimately, these applications remain open for a minimum of two years, which causes an administrative burden on staff because these same applications must still be reviewed and processed.

Based on the current law, it should be noted that the records and files of these applications received over two years become outdated. Information regarding

¹ Currently, nurses licensed in other jurisdictions may work in the State pursuant to emergency rules effective December 5, 2022, without first obtaining a Hawaii nurse license.

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disciplinary actions taken in other jurisdictions or convictions may change during this period the applications are pending.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this administration bill.