

SB 280

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF NURSING**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2009

Wednesday, February 11, 2009
3:00 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 280, RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES.

TO THE HONORABLE DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Kathy Yokouchi. I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Nursing ("Board"). I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Board in strong opposition to Senate Bill No. 280.

The purpose of this bill is to remove, for an unlicensed foreign nursing school graduate applying for a registered nurse ("RN") license in Hawaii, the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator. It would allow the RN's school to furnish a "breakdown of educational program for international nursing program form" along with a transcript that is in English or is translated into English.

Many years ago, the Legislature, in its wisdom, set forth the nurse licensing requirements of Hawaii which are consistent with forty-one other states and provide the most rational approach for assuring public safety as well as nurse mobility. The Board firmly believes that all international and domestic nurses should be equally qualified to safely practice nursing under the auspices of the laws and regulations of Hawaii. Reducing standards to expedite entry does not adequately protect the public. Increased consistency in licensure requirements with other state boards is also an appropriate direction for regulation in a rapidly shrinking world.

Senate Bill No. 280 cites cost as a factor, but does not address consumer safety. The Board, like forty-one other state boards, believes that domestic and international nurses must be held to the same standards of nursing education, training and testing. International nurses

should receive comparable nursing education from a government-approved school (current federal requirements); possess effective English skills to safely practice in the U.S. healthcare environment; and have no current or previous disciplinary actions related to their international or domestic licenses.

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools International¹ (“CGFNS”) is an immigration-neutral, nonprofit organization and is an internationally recognized authority on credentials evaluation pertaining to the education, registration, and licensure of nurses and other healthcare professionals worldwide. CGFNS protects the public by ensuring that nurses and other healthcare professionals educated in countries other than the United States are eligible and qualified to meet licensure, immigration and other practice requirements in the United States.

The requirement for uniform evaluation is connected to federal immigration laws. Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (“IIRIRA”) of 1996 (P.L. 104-208) requires that all international health professionals, except physicians, must be certified by the CGFNS or another independent, government-certified organization qualified to issue credentials. The certification and the course-by-course evaluation process verify that

¹The history of CGFNS International (formerly the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools) begins in the late 1960s when the United States experienced an increase in nurse migration from other countries. Immigration officials had a difficult time identifying who of the nurses educated abroad and applying for nursing occupational visas would be eligible for licensure as a registered nurse in the United States. On average, only 15 to 20% of nurses educated outside the United States were passing the U.S. registered nurse licensure exam on their first attempt.

This led the Division of Nursing of the then Department of Health, Education and Welfare (“DHEW”) to contract for two studies regarding RN licensure of internationally educated nurses in the United States. The findings of these landmark studies on international nurse migration conducted by the American Nurses Association (“ANA”) and Pace University were discussed at a 1975 DHEW conference attended by representatives of the ANA, the National League for Nursing (“NLN”), U.S. boards of nursing, the American Hospital Association (“AHA”), the American Medical Association (“AMA”), the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the New York State Education Department and the International Council of Nurses, among other organizations. The outgrowth of the conference was the establishment of CGFNS as a private, independent, not-for-profit organization tasked with developing and administering a predictive testing and credentials evaluation program for internationally educated nurses. The organization has expanded to perform credentials evaluations and verifications for other internationally educated health care professionals.

the international health care worker's education, training, or experience meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for entry into the United States. In addition, any international license submitted must be validated as authentic and unencumbered.

Hawaii offers foreign school graduates two options. They can complete the CGFNS certification process which would meet the immigration requirements or they can have their educational credentials evaluated by the CGFNS on a course-by-course basis and take the NCLEX which is another route to meet the immigration requirements (the NCLEX or the CGFNS predictor examination for RNs are one of the requirements for VisaScreen).

Senate Bill No. 280 refers to California's use of a document known as "the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs form". The form is completed by the foreign graduate's school. The evaluation is hardly objective and the nursing programs around the world do not use a uniform standard of measure. California does require that the nurse undergoes a credential review by specialists within their agency. (Like most boards, the Hawaii Board does not have the manpower or the expertise to do this.) This means that foreign school graduates must have their transcripts and a course summary statement from their nursing school sent directly to the California Board of Nursing as well as documents verifying their license from the licensing authority in their country. Unfortunately, California will not accept the VisaScreen by the CGFNS or any other credential evaluation. They will review a copy of a credential certificate from another source, but California still must complete its own review of the transcript. Since the immigration law specifically requires the VisaScreen, foreign school graduates applying for licensure in California must be **credentialed twice**, and have the forms and transcripts sent to both California and the CGFNS. CGFNS will not accept the California Board of Nursing Credential Review. Neither California nor the CGFNS will recognize their respective credential review, leaving the nurse with two sets of fees and the potential for delays when documents are not received. The most common cause for delays in the completion of the

credentialing by both agencies is not receiving the required documents from the licensing agency and also from the nursing school in a timely manner.

In conclusion, the Board believes that preserving uniform licensing requirements ensures consumer safety and nurse mobility in times of crisis and emergencies. Uniform requirements lessen confusion for patients, nurses, other health team members and third party payers, as well as legislators and policy makers. It is crucial that we avoid simply choosing the least expensive and seemingly easier route.

We respectfully request that this measure be held in Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 280.

Healthcare School of Hawaii

98-025 Hekaha St. Suite 4, Bldg. 4

Aiea, Hawaii 96701

808-488-9449

www.healthcareschoolofhawaii.com

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SB280

RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2009

CONFERENCE ROOM 016

February 9, 2009

To: Honorable Senator David Y. Ige

Chairman, Senate Health Committee

Honorable Senator Josh Green MD

Vice Chairman, Senate Health Committee

Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Roslyn Baker, Sen. Will Espero,

Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Sen. Fred Hemmings

Dear Sir,

I am a foreign graduate nurse from the Philippines and had worked in USA since 1979. I originally applied for nursing licensure in the State of Illinois, and my credential s was evaluated by the Illinois Board of Nursing. I worked in Illinois for 20 years and moved to Hawaii after. I was never required to apply through CGFNS. I am in total support of removing the requirement of CGFNS for foreign nursing graduates in Hawaii prior to taking the NCLEX exam.

Sincerely,

Marianela Jacob MSN, RN

Training Coordinator

Healthcare School of Hawaii

808-488-9449

hsch@hawaii.rr.com



Hawaii Campus
827 Fort Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
808 536-2686
Fax 808 536-3040

Millennium Learning Center
Millennium Town Center
95-1749 Mehuika Parkway
Suite # 1
Millennial, Hawaii 96789
808 536-2600
Fax 808 625-7749

Kapolei Learning Center
Campbell Square, Kapolei Building
11011 Kamukila Boulevard
Suite 120
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707
808 536-2600
Fax 808 674-2655

Testimony
Senate Committee on Health
Senate Bill 280, Relating to Registered Nurses

My name is Glenda Tali. I am the Campus College Chair for Nursing and Health Care administration at the Hawaii Campus of the University of Phoenix.

The University of Phoenix opposes Senate Bill 280, and fully concurs with the Board of Nursing's position.

I believe that removing the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator will be detrimental the health and well-being of the people of the State of Hawaii.

As a registered nurse for more than 20 years, a nurse practitioner for 12 years, and a nurse educator for 11 years, I believe that removing the requirement will open the door for foreign nurses to come into Hawaii and practice without meeting the standards set forth for registered nurses. This can only lead to poor outcomes for our patients, the people of the State of Hawaii, which we must not tolerate.

I recognize that there exists a severe nursing shortage both here in Hawaii as well as across our nation, but strongly disagree that this is the way to alleviate that shortage. We must maintain quality in education and practice for every registered nurse in this and every state. We must not be short-sighted in thinking that removing this requirement will be beneficial to the state or to our people.

As a nurse educator, I recognize that there exists a large deficit in the language, knowledge and skills of our foreign-educated nurses. This fact cannot be ignored. I have worked with foreign-educated nurses in an effort to bring their knowledge and skills up to the set standards. We must maintain these standards as set forth by the Legislature previously. The current process does not exclude foreign-educated nurses from practicing, but rather provides much-needed quality assurance for our profession and our patients.

I believe with the Board of Nursing that preserving uniform licensing requirements ensures consumer safety and nurse mobility in times of crisis and emergencies. I also agree with the Board that it is crucial that we avoid simply choosing the least expensive and seemingly easier route. We must maintain the standards for the health and well-being of our people.

I also respectfully request that this measure be held in Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments.

Testimony
Senate Committee on Health
Senate Bill 280, Relating to Registered Nurses

My name is Glenda Tali. I am the Campus College Chair for Nursing and Health Care administration at the Hawaii Campus of the University of Phoenix.

The University of Phoenix opposes Senate Bill 280, and fully concurs with the Board of Nursing's position.

I believe that removing the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator will be detrimental the health and well-being of the people of the State of Hawaii.

As a registered nurse for more than 20 years, a nurse practitioner for 12 years, and a nurse educator for 11 years, I believe that removing the requirement will open the door for foreign nurses to come into Hawaii and practice without meeting the standards set forth for registered nurses. This can only lead to poor outcomes for our patients, the people of the State of Hawaii, which we must not tolerate.

I recognize that there exists a severe nursing shortage both here in Hawaii as well as across our nation, but strongly disagree that this is the way to alleviate that shortage. We must maintain quality in education and practice for every registered nurse in this and every state. We must not be short-sighted in thinking that removing this requirement will be beneficial to the state or to our people.

As a nurse educator, I recognize that there exists a large deficit in the language, knowledge and skills of our foreign-educated nurses. This fact cannot be ignored. I have worked with foreign-educated nurses in an effort to bring their knowledge and skills up to the set standards. We must maintain these standards as set forth by the Legislature previously. The current process does not exclude foreign-educated nurses from practicing, but rather provides much-needed quality assurance for our profession and our patients.

I believe with the Board of Nursing that preserving uniform licensing requirements ensures consumer safety and nurse mobility in times of crisis and emergencies. I also agree with the Board that it is crucial that we avoid simply choosing the least expensive and seemingly easier route. We must maintain the standards for the health and well-being of our people.

I also respectfully request that this measure be held in Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health
February 11, 2009, 3:00 p.m.

by

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
and

Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor

School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 280 RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Green, and members of the Senate Committee on Health, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 280 which proposes to remove the professional evaluator requirement for foreign nursing school graduates applying for registered nurse licensure in Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) is an educational program preparing registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses in Hawai'i. The UHM nursing program is fully accredited and recognized as an approved educational program by the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing.

It is critical to preserve uniform licensing requirements to ensure consumer safety and nurse mobility within and between Hawai'i. The current system protects the public by ensuring that a foreign nurse applicant's educational requirements are evaluated by a professional educational third-party, the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CFGNS) International. CFGNS validates international professional education and credentials in support of regulation and educational standards for health care professionals. They are an immigration-neutral non-profit organization, internationally recognized as an authority on credentials evaluation pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of nurses and other health care professionals worldwide. We support the position of the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing on this measure.

SONDH is committed to supporting a collaborative environment for nursing colleagues at the state, national and international levels. We believe the mechanism utilizing a professional educational evaluator for foreign nursing school graduates facilitates a collegial environment for health care professionals while addressing the first and foremost priority for consumer safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Filipino American Citizens League

Jake Manegdeg, President
P. O. Box 270126 * Honolulu, Hawai'i 96827

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280

Senate Committee on Health

Feb. 11, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. David Y. Ige, Chair
Honorable Sen. Josh Green, M.D., Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Rosalyn H. Baker,
Sen. Will Espero, Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Sen. Fred Hemmings

From: Jake Manegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

Measure Title: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for an unlicensed foreign nursing school graduate applying for a registered nurse license in Hawaii, the requirement for a school transcript to be evaluated. Requires board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs form.

My name is Jake Manegdeg. I am the president of the Filipino American Citizens League. The Filipino American Citizens League was formed over ten years ago to contribute to the advancement of civil rights and social justice for minority groups, underserved populations, and vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and social action.

I submit this testimony to strongly support this bill with the following revision to the entire description above: "Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). Requires the board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs and Transcript of Records from the nursing school."

Supporting these proposed changes to the nursing certification requirements still upholds standards and credentials that are essential to practice nursing in Hawaii. These changes are also necessary to address Hawaii's serious nursing shortage. Thank you for the chance to provide support for this bill. Your help in its passage is greatly appreciated.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg
President, Filipino American Citizens League



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

Unit Organizations

Alliance of Residential
Carehome Administrators
Aloha Saguibsib Cultural
Foundation, Inc.
Annac ti Bado iti Hawaii
Annac ti Batac
Annac ti Caoayan 2002
Annak ti Kailokuan iti
America
Annak ti Sinait iti Hawaii
Asingan Organization of
Hawaii
Badoc-Pinili Aid
Association of Hawaii
Banna Association of
Hawaii
Bannatiran Association of
Hawaii
Batangas Association of
Hawaii
Bulacan Circle of Hawaii
Caballeros de Dimasalang
Cabugao Sons & Daughters
of Hawaii
Candonians of Hawaii
Caoayan ISAH
Cavitenians of Hawaii
Dingras Association of
Hawaii
Divine Word College
Alumni Association
FilAm Sports USA
Fil American Citizens
League
Filipino Business Women's
Club
Filipino Nurses Organization
of Hawaii
Filipino Women's Civic
Club
GUMIL Hawaii
GUMIL Oahu
Hawaii Filipino Women's
Club
Hawaii Council of Bilingual
Educators
ILAH
Ilocos Nortenians of
America
INCAT Alumni Association
of Hawaii
International Filipino
Society of Hawaii
Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
La Union Circle of
Hawaii
Lingayen Gulf Club of
Hawaii

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280

Senate Committee on Health

Feb. 11, 2009, 3 p.m., Hawai'i State Legislature, Room 016

To:

Sen. David Y. Ige, Chair, and Sen. Josh Green, M.D., Vice-Chair
Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Rosalyn H. Baker, Sen. Will
Espero, Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Sen. Fred Hemmings

From:

Cirvalina Longboy, President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

My name is Cirvalina Longboy, president of the Oahu
Filipino Community Council. OFCC is an umbrella organization that
represents a network of non-profit civic groups with a unified
vision to improve the lives of our Filipino communities.

I submit this testimony to strongly support this bill with
the following correction to the description, which states:

"Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by
examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of
obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign
Nursing Schools (CGFNS). Requires the board of nursing to adopt rules
requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for
International Nursing Programs and Transcript of Records from the
nursing school."

This bill:

- ***Cuts the unnecessary and expensive red tape of the Hawai'i Board of Nurses*** regulations, which now has a 6-month or more log jam that blocks internationally trained registered nurses (RN) to take the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination).
- ***Safeguards public safety by ensuring the proper vetting of transcripts and curriculum*** of internationally trained RNs, who are already U.S. citizens or permanent resident immigrants residing in Hawaii.
- ***Follows established best regulatory practices for nursing licensure*** in more than 20 states, including California and Michigan, to enable internationally trained RNs to demonstrate their nursing competencies to protect public health, by passing the NCLEX.

With your help in the passage of this bill, qualified nurses can be of
service sooner to address Hawai'i's nursing shortage.

Sincerely,

Cirvalina Longboy, President
Oahu Filipino Community Council

Unit Organizations

Magsingal Association of
Hawaii
Narvacan/San Antonio Club of
Hawaii
Nueva Vizcaya Association of
Hawaii
Pasuquinos Association of
Hawaii
Philippine Cultural Foundation
Philippine Nurses
Association of Hawaii
Piddig Association of Hawaii
Sanchez Mira Association of
Hawaii
San Manuel Pangasinan
Association of Hawaii
San Nicolaneos USA
San Nicolas Goodwill
Foundation
San Nicolas Teachers of
Hawaii
Santa Lucia Association of
Hawaii
Sarrat Association of Hawaii
Sarrat International Inc.
Sinait Nt. High School Alumni
of Hawaii
Solsona of Hawaii
Tarlac Mutual Club of Hawaii
TPCP
Kalihi Ballroom, Inc.
Sadiri ti San Nicolas iti Hawaii
Samar Leyte Association of
Hawaii
Sampaguita/Sunflower Club of
Hawaii
San Juan Association of
Hawaii
San Nicolas Nat. High
Santa Marians of Hawaii
School Alumni
Santa Nicolas Nat. High
School Bingao Annex
Tagalog Association of Oahu
United Bacarreneos of Hawaii
United Group of Home
Operators
United Pangasinan of Hawaii
United Urdaneta Club of
Hawaii
United Vintarinians of Hawaii
Vigan Association of Hawaii



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280

Senate Committee on Health

Feb. 11, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 016

To: Honorable Sen. David Y. Ige, Chair, and Honorable Sen. Josh Green, M.D., Vice-Chair
Honorable Senate Health Committee Members: Sen. Rosalyn H. Baker, Sen. Will Espero, Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Sen. Fred Hemmings

From: Charlene Cuaresma, MPH, President, Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

Measure Title: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for an unlicensed foreign nursing school graduate applying for a registered nurse license in Hawaii, the requirement for a school transcript to be evaluated. Requires board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs form.

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I want to express appreciation to you for hearing this important bill. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders, whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, and social action.

I am submitting testimony in strong support of this bill with an amendment to correct an error in the description. Please change the bill's description above to:

Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). Requires the board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs and Transcript of Records from the nursing school.

As U.S. schools of nursing and health care systems across the country are failing to meet the demands of training and certifying enough nurses to deliver America's health care needs, internationally educated registered nurses have been sought out for decades to fill this gaping void. The purpose of this bill is to streamline the certification program process, while at the same time safeguarding high nursing standards. This bill is modeled after best management practices of reducing red tape and exorbitant certification fees by a simple updating of board of nursing rules that has been increasingly adopted by the majority of states, including California. The resulting certification process not only retains accountability of credentials and professional nursing skills, but also fast tracks qualified nurses into Hawaii's health care labor force.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma, MPH
President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity



CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

99-1325 Aiea Heights Drive, Aiea, HI 96701

TO: Sen. David Y. Ige
Chair, Senate Committee on Health

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, February 11, 2009
3:00 p.m., Room 016

SUBJECT: Testimony in strong support of SB286

Mr. Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Health. My name is Margarita L. Hopkins, president of the Congress of Visayan Organizations, the statewide umbrella of Visayan organizations in Hawaii.

I am testifying in strong support of SB286, which facilitates the certification process of foreign nursing graduates. This bill will assist in addressing the shortfall of nurses in Hawaii as well as in the nation. This process is already being done in California and there is no reason why it could not be done in Hawaii.

We therefore urge your committee to approve this bill.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

MARGARITA HOPKINS
President



Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.

... a non-profit organization with a mission to address the global nursing shortage by providing guidance and assistance for nursing colleagues to obtain their professional license in nursing.

P.O. Box 2034 Aiea, HI 96701
E-mail: bramosrazon@aol.com

Beatrice Ramos-Razon,
RN, FACDONA
President

Tessie Oculito, RN
Vice President

D Jun Obaldo, RN, BSN
Corresponding Secretary

Au Curameng, RN, CM
Recording Secretary

Margie A. Berueda, RN, CM
Treasurer

Lynn Barnes, RN, CM
Assistant Treasurer

Bong Curameng, CCHT
Auditor

Michael G. Berueda, LPL
Computer Support

Joe Magno
Technical Support

Mentors & Volunteers:

Christiaan De Vera, RN, BSN

Erlinda Ferrer, RN, BSN

Estrella Guevarra, RN

Delmar Magno, RN, C

Edel Matias, RN, CM

Cielito Lyn Matias, RN, BSN

Brenda Monegas, RN

Oscar Querido, RN

Lucy Porte, RNC

Violeta Sadural, RN, BSN

Tina Salvador, RN, BSN, CNN

Ramon Sumibcay, CPT, AN

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280 RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

February 11, 2009 3PM
Hawaii State Legislature Room 016

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for a licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS)

To: Honorable Sen David Y. Ige, Chair
Honorable Sen Josh Green Vice-Chair
Honorable Health Committee Members:
Sen Roslyn H. Baker, Sen Will Espero, Sen Clarence K.
Nishihara, Sen Fred Hemmings

From: Beatrice Ramos-Razon, RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc. (NAMI)

My name is Beatrice Ramos-Razon. As the Founder and President of NAMI (Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.), we are in strong support of this bill. NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 volunteer nurses, instructors, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawai'i's people by addressing not only a statewide, but worldwide nursing shortage through the training and mentoring of foreign graduate nurses, many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds, to pass Hawai'i's nurses board exams.

Before anyone can practice as a Registered Nurse, the practitioner has to pass a board examination for licensure. This National Council Licensure Examination or NCLEX-RN is the first entry level of competence for the Nurse.

The Board of Nursing provides the eligibility for authorization to take the examination. A requirement for a foreign school graduate applying for a licensure by examination in Hawaii is obtaining a certification from the CGFNS-Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. To accomplish the certification, one has to apply for a certification program or Credentials Evaluation Service Report. The certification program is comprised of a credentials review, qualifying exam,

English proficiency examination costs \$418. The Credentials Evaluation Service Report analyzes the credentials of the applicant and cost \$ 378. The application for license by examination is \$40.

The fee for application for license by examination to California Board of Nursing is \$126. The requirement for a foreign graduate nurse is to send a form to their nursing school asking the school to send a breakdown of the nursing program and transcripts of records directly to the California Board of Nursing for evaluation. There is an additional fee of \$200 by the applicant for an authorization to take the exam payable to either board of nursing.

The additional requirement by the Hawaii Board of Nursing not only delays the application process but incurs additional costs to the consumers. This barrier has resulted to Hawaii residents apply for licensure to the California Board of Nursing. I am fully aware of this because I am involved with NAMI-Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc. a volunteer group providing free RN review classes and mentoring potential nurses. All of the foreign graduate reviewees about 150 who go through the program for the year, complete the California Board of Nursing Application. When they get their eligibility to take the exam, they may take the national exam here in Hawaii or any state. When they pass the examination, they are issued a California RN license and if they stay and practice in Hawaii, they can obtain a Hawaii license by reciprocity from the Board of Nursing.

This bill is to remove the requirement of CGFNS by the Hawaii Board of Nursing and to adopt rules similar to the other 23 states like California who do their own credentialing and evaluation of the nursing program of the applicants. The new rule may apply only to legal residents in Hawaii or American citizens who obtained their education outside USA. The new rule will not apply to nurses applying for a working visa because US immigration requires a VisaScreen certificate from CGFNS. Passage of the bill will likely increase the number of individuals applying to Hawaii Board of Nursing.

The intent of this bill is not to decrease the standards in anyway, but mainly to facilitate the application process of licensure for foreign graduate nurses. We all share in the common vision of the nursing schools, healthcare facilities and nursing organizations: the successful licensure of competent and eligible nurses for consumer safety and public good.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos-Razon, RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc
Executive Director, Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii

credentials of the applicant and cost \$ 378. The application for license by examination is \$40.

The fee for application for license by examination to California Board of Nursing is \$126. The requirement for a foreign graduate nurse is to send a form to their nursing school asking the school to send a breakdown of the nursing program and transcripts of records directly to the California Board of Nursing for evaluation. There is an additional fee of \$200 by the applicant for an authorization to take the exam payable to either board of nursing.

The additional requirement by the Hawaii Board of Nursing not only delays the application process but incurs additional costs to the consumers. This barrier has resulted to Hawaii residents apply for licensure to the California Board of Nursing. I am fully aware of this because I am involved with NAMI-Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc. a volunteer group providing free RN review classes and mentoring potential nurses. All of the foreign graduate reviewees about 150 who go through the program for the year, complete the California Board of Nursing Application. When they get their eligibility to take the exam, they may take the national exam here in Hawaii or any state. When they pass the examination, they are issued a California RN license and if they stay and practice in Hawaii, they can obtain a Hawaii license by reciprocity from the Board of Nursing.

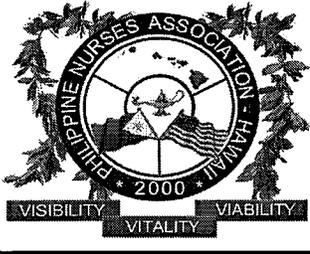
This bill is to remove the requirement of CGFNS by the Hawaii Board of Nursing and to adopt rules similar to the other 23 states like California who do their own credentialing and evaluation of the nursing program of the applicants. The new rule may apply only to legal residents in Hawaii or American citizens who obtained their education outside USA. The new rule will not apply to nurses applying for a working visa because US immigration requires a VisaScreen certificate from CGFNS. Passage of the bill will likely increase the number of individuals applying to Hawaii Board of Nursing.

The intent of this bill is not to decrease the standards in anyway, but mainly to facilitate the application process of licensure for foreign graduate nurses. We all share in the common vision of the nursing schools, healthcare facilities and nursing organizations: the successful licensure of competent and eligible nurses for consumer safety and public good.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos-Razon
RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc
Executive Director, Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii



The Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii

<http://www.pnahawaii.org>

E-mail: pna_hawaii@yahoo.com or
president@pnahawaii.org

February 2, 2009

To

Members

of

CGFNS

to ease the

\$126.00

add

2008-2010

JOSE JACOB

President

MARIANELA JACOB

President-elect

Edel Matias

Liza Josue-Cabaccang

Vice-Presidents

Lily Sadang

Asst. Secretary

Erlinda Ferrer

Treasurer

Aurora Sera

Asst. Treasurer

Tina Fernandez

Amelie Washington

Auditors

Mila Beltran

Nenita Andrada-Jose

P.R.O.

Delmar Magno

Franklin Tumamao

Bus. Mgrs.

2006-2010

Aurea Agas

Richelle Asselstine

Anita Felipe

2008-2012

Lyn Barnes

Aurora Curameng

Jun Obaldo

Estela Ruiz

Medy Delara

Board Members

Agie Pigao-Cadiz

Anne Leake

Tina Salvador

Emilyn Ramones

Clem Ceria-Ulep

Advisers

Tessie Oculito

Past President

Bea Ramos-Razon

*Executive Director/
Parliamentarian*

RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2009

1016

David Y. Ige

Health Committee

Josh Green M.D.

enate Health Committee

Health Committee Members: Sen. Roslyn H. Baker,

Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Sen. Fred Hemmings

A Hawaii, a local organization of Filipino-American

organization in Hawaii, and a chapter member of the

Association of America, Inc (PNAA), supports the Hawaii

certification requirements from CGFNS

(States of Foreign Nursing Schools).

mandate foreign nursing schools to send credentials to

thus add toward the lengthy and costly application

fee at \$378.00, or the certificate program fee at \$418.00.

In the process, these foreign nursing graduates request their

credentials directly to California Board of Nursing at a fee

of \$100.

SB 280 is for the foreign nursing graduates to

return to Hawaii without incurring expenses that CGFNS

is asking for the Hawaii Board of Nursing to do the

SB 280 will not compromise the security and safety of

the state as the opposition has affirmed.

SB 280 entitles only those foreign nursing school graduates

from the United States of America as green card holder or an

Hawaii

Wailua Brandman APRN-Rx BC
Ke'ena Mauliola Nele Paia, LLC
615 Piikoi Street. Suite 1509
Honolulu, HI 96814

February 8, 2009

To: Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair and
Members of the Senate Committee on Health

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016
Re: S.B. 280 Relating to Registered Nurses

Aloha and good afternoon, Chair Ige and Members of the Senate Committee on Health. My name is Wailua Brandman. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony, as an individual, in opposition to SB 280. I am an APRN in private practice in Honolulu. My specialty is Adult Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. I am the President of the Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses. My other professional responsibilities include being the O'ahu Board Member-at-Large of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association Hawai'i Chapter, and I am a committee member of the APRN Advisory Committee to the Hawai'i Board of Nursing (Board).

I am in agreement with the testimony of Kathleen Yokouchi, Executive Officer of the Board. The current regulation of Foreign Nurses was initiated and continues to serve as a means of consumer protection. While Foreign Nurses are encouraged to practice in Hawai'i, it is necessary to ensure that the standards of their practice here meet the minimum standards of U.S. educated nurses. This is accomplished by requiring that they show equivalent education and safety as well as the ability to communicate with their patients in our national language.

Thank you for your consideration. I strongly urge you to hold this bill in committee.

Warmest Aloha,

Wailua Brandman MSN APRN CS 40

Wailua Brandman APRN-Rx BC

From: Lily Robinos [lilysadang@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 5:09 PM
To: HTHTestimony
Cc: bramosrazon@aol.com

Categories: Green Category, Blue Category

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FEB.10,2009,415PM
HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE
CONFERENCE ROOM NO.016

TO :HEALTH COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MEMBERS

FROM:LILIA S.ROBINOS
ASSISTANT SECREATARY
PHILIPPINE NURSE ASSOCIATION,HAWAII CHAPTER

My name is Lilia S.Robinos,a Registered Nurse and assistant secretary of PNAH. Been a practicing registered nurse for 36 years in one of the biggest hospital in the Island and I'm proud to say that most of the CN III and CN IV are of Filipino descent. We value our shared governance and we advocate patient's safety as well as their family according to Hawaii Nurses Practice Act and ANA standards of Nursing Practice and Performance.

I am submitting this testimony to strongly support the Bill SB 820 with the following revision:

" Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign nursing Schools. Requires the board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs and Transcript of Records from the nursing school."

I strongly believed that eliminating the present process of obtaining a Hawaii license for RN would certainly not compromise the delivery of quality and excellent patient care to the people of Hawaii or to any community.

Respectfully Yours,
Lilia S. Robinos

From: Lily Robinos [lilysadang@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 4:56 PM
To: HTHTestimony
Cc: bramosrazon@aol.com

Categories: Green Category, Blue Category

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 280

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FEB.10,2009,415PM
HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE
CONFERENCE ROOM NO.016

TO :HEALTH COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MEMBERS

FROM:LILIA S.ROBINOS
ASSISTANT SECREATARY
PHILIPPINE NURSE ASSOCIATION,HAWAII CHAPTER

My name is Lilia S.Robinos,a Registered Nurse and assistant secreatary of PNAH. Been a practicing registered nurse for 36 years in one of the biggest hospital in the Island and I'm proud to say that most of the CN III and CN IV are of Filipino descent. We value our shared governance and we advocate patient's safety as well as their family according to Hawaii Nurses Practice Act and ANA standards of Nursing Practice and Performance.

I am submitting this testimony to strongly support the Bill SB 820 with the following revision.

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Wednesday, February 11, 2009
Conference Room 16
3 pm

**TESTIMONY in OPPOSITION to SENATE BILL NO. 280
RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES.**

TO: THE HONORABLE DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Amy Stone Murai. I have been an RN for 35 years, and a Nurse Practitioner for 32. I testify as a concerned private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill No. 280 Relating To Registered Nurses, which seeks to remove, for unlicensed foreign nursing school graduates applying for a registered nurse ("RN") license in Hawaii, the requirement to have the applicant's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator.

An article about the quality of nursing education in the January 28, 2008 edition of the Philippine Star (Manila) exemplifies the importance of meticulous evaluation of a foreign graduate's qualifications.

"In a consolidated interim audit report of the Commission on Higher Education's 2007 operations, the Commission on Audit (COA) has expressed concern over the agency's failure to close down nursing schools whose nursing graduates have consistently performed miserably in the licensure examinations of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)... COA auditors said that for the past years, there were 19 schools that did not even have one nursing graduate who passed the board exams.

"From 2001 to 2005, only 111 out of 263 nursing schools nationwide managed to have at least 50 percent of their graduates pass the PRC licensure examinations, with 19 or 7.22 percent of these schools failing to have even a single passer," the COA audit report said.

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools International ("CGFNS") is the designated evaluation organization for the Hawaii Board of Nursing and for most others across the country. CGFNS protects the public by ensuring that healthcare professionals educated in other countries are eligible and qualified to meet licensure, immigration and other practice requirements in the United States. It uses uniform standards in evaluating programs, credentials and foreign licensure attainment to ensure that applicants arrive with comparable background and reasonable success in achieving licensure in the United States. CGFNS relieves regulatory boards of a critical but onerous and time-consuming task that few state boards are staffed to undertake. I refer committee members the excellent testimony submitted By Kathleen Yokouchi, Executive Officer of the Hawaii Board of Nursing, for further details.

Hawaii's current regulatory requirements allow well-qualified foreign nursing graduates two cost and time-effective pathways to licensure. The safety and protection of our citizens and visitors must outweigh any urge to value quantity over quality where health care is concerned.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Amy Stone Murai, RN, MS, APRN-c

TO: The Senate Health Committee (Chair and Sen. David Ige, Vice Chair Sen. Josh Green, MD, Sen. Roslyn Baker, Sen. Will Espero, Sen. Clarence Nishihara and Sen. Fred Hemmings)

FROM: Ramon A. Sumibcay, RN, BSN and Teresita Oculito, RN

SUBJ: Senate Bill 280

We are writing your Committee to show our strongest support for the bill for the following reasons:

1. The Bill is just simply asking for the removal of the CGFNS certification requirement. Outsourcing this process is more expensive for the applicants, and it takes a longer process. It is all about taking care of our own constituents' needs.
2. The Bill does not and will not lower nursing practice standards. Local nursing institutions/employers have policies and procedures that enforce and safeguard nursing practice standards.
3. The Bill does not and will not compromise safe patient care. Any Registered Nurse will attest that he/she will practice his/her noble profession always putting "Safe Patient Care" first.
4. Thank you for considering this testimony for the passing of the above bill.

Sincerely,

Teresita Oculito Ramon Sumibcay

Support for Testimony
House Committee on Health
Senate Bill 280, Relating to Registered Nurses

My name is Denise Cohen. I am an Associate Professor of Nursing at University of Hawaii – Maui Community College

I am writing to voice my support for the testimony that will be given by Kathy Yokouchi, Executive Officer for the Board of Nursing.

I believe that removing the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator will be detrimental the health and well being of the people of the State of Hawaii.

As a registered nurse for more than 30 years, a nurse practitioner for 10 years, and a nurse educator for 17 years, I believe that removing the requirement will open the door for foreign nurses from unaccredited schools to come into Hawaii and practice without meeting the standards set forth in order to ensure patient safety. This can only lead to poor outcomes for our patients, which the people of the State of Hawaii, should not tolerate.

I recognize that there exists a severe nursing shortage both here in Hawaii as well as across our nation, but strongly disagree that this is the way to alleviate that shortage. We must maintain quality in education and practice for every registered nurse in this and every state. We must not be shortsighted in thinking that removing this requirement will be beneficial to the state or to our people.

As a nurse educator, I recognize that there exist many quality schools of nursing in foreign countries. However, there also exists large numbers of schools who do not meet standards in Hawaii or the rest of the nation. This fact cannot be ignored. We must maintain these standards as set forth by the Legislature previously. The current process does not exclude foreign-educated nurses from practicing, but rather provides much-needed quality assurance for our profession and our patients.

As a consumer I wonder who will pay for the Board of Nursing to check the credentials of every nursing college in foreign countries. The Bill cites California as an example of a BON who checks the accreditation of Foreign educated nurses. However, they have a department within the Board who will do this. Hawaii's Board of Nursing is consists of 1.5 persons and does not have the manpower to check the credentials of every school. I believe this will slow down foreign nursing attempting to get licensure within Hawaii. Furthermore who will sustain the cost of this service? Hawaii and the rest of the country are experiencing a severe

economic downturn. The only way I can see our BON providing this service is by charging practicing nurses more money to renew licenses.

I also respectfully request that this measure be held in Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.

From: Cecilia Mukai [cmukai@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 12:10 PM
To: HTHTestimony
Subject: Vote against SB 280

Importance: High

Categories: Green Category, Blue Category

Dear Senators,

I am writing as an individual citizen and strongly urge you to vote against SB 280.

As a nurse practitioner and nurse educator, I have always had concerns about the quality of nursing care in Hawaii. Any efforts to lower the oversight of that quality would be a disservice to the citizens of Hawaii. This bill's cancellation of an independent, expert review of foreign transcripts would put the onus on the Board of Nursing (BON) to verify academic quality, which is wrongly putting the responsibility and cost onto the BON for academic review and, sometimes, foreign translation and determination of equivalencies. The BON does not have adequate resources to do this. I urge the health committee to reject SB 280 and any other measures to lower the requirements for the education of Registered Nurses.

Aloha, Cecilia Mukai, PhD, APRN
Associate Professor in Nursing, UH Hilo
Hawaii Board of Nursing member
Family Nurse Practitioner, Board Certified

LETTER IN SUPPORT FOR SB 280

February 10, 2009

SB 280

Report Title:

Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description:

Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). Requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs and Transcripts of Records from the nursing school.

**TO THE HONORABLE DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR,
THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN, M.D., VICE CHAIR,
AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE:**

My name is Aurora A. Curameng. I am a Philippine schooled nursing graduate and a Registered Nurse in the State of Hawaii, since 1993.

I am quite appalled by how intricate application for NCLEX eligibility has become in our State. During my time, before the advent of computerized adaptive testing (CAT) format utilized in NCLEX, international nurses like myself need only to obtain a certificate of equivalent nursing education from an accredited credentialing education service agency by the Board prior to taking the test.

Contrary to what others believe, SB 280 does not reduce the standards to determine if a foreign nursing graduate qualify to take the NCLEX. Submission of the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs and transcript of records, helps in the determination whether a candidate has an educational background comparable or at par with the American standards of education in nursing, and should qualify the candidate to take the examination in the same way as an American counterpart. I strongly believe in equal opportunity for both domestic and international nurses and they must be held in the same standard no matter what.

Senate Bill 280 is also trying to address a complaint of exorbitant fees imposed by the private sector and non-profit organization to international nurses, which for many years "have fallen into deaf ears." Our foreign nursing graduates would rather take a circuitous route to their dream of obtaining a license to practice nursing in their home State to save some precious and hard earned monies without circumventing the standard of eligibility to take the examination. Consumer safety is in no way compromised at this juncture. The bill is actually consumer (candidate) friendly.

The knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level is what the NCLEX-RN supposed to harness from each candidate. This is to ensure public protection and safety. Likewise, the test is given in English only format to make sure that passers demonstrate proficiency in both clinical and English communication skills. But this is not the purpose of the bill. The bill is to expedite the process of evaluating potential candidates for the NCLEX and upholding the same standard of licensing requirements.

As a nurse of foreign origin, I am extending full support of this bill to encourage more unlicensed foreign nursing graduates, **who are eligible**, to work towards the fulfillment of their aspiration of becoming a Registered Nurse in the land of opportunity.

Respectfully,

AURORA A. CURAMENG, RN, C, RAC-CT
94-399 Alapine Street
Waipahu, HI 96797
aurorarnc@aol.com
(808) 677-7385
(808) 230-2496

From: Divina Telan Robillard [divina@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 4:07 PM
To: HTHTestimony
Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB 280

Categories: Green Category, Blue Category

Testimony in Strong Support of SB 280, Relating to Registered Nurses

February 11, 2009, 3:00pm

Hawai'i State Legislature Room 016
Honorable Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Honorable Health Committee Member

My name is Divina Telan Robillard. I have been a Registered Nurse in Hawaii since 1977. I am currently a fulltime caregiver to my husband, Professor Albert Robillard of UH – Manoa who has Lou Gehrig's disease. I am also facilitator-founder of the MDA ALS Support Group which meets monthly.

I am writing in support of SB 280. As a nurse in the community, I see the need to increase the number of nurses who will work in home and community care settings. Removing unnecessary obstacles to nurses who want to apply for licensure in Hawaii will increase the pool from which nurses can be tapped to help families who care for loved ones in the home.

I strongly recommend that you pass SB 280. For further questions, you can reach me at my email: divina@hawaii.edu

Mahola nui loa,

Divina Telan Robillard
244 Akiohala St.
Kailua, HI 96734

Divina Telan Robillard, RN, MPH
Health and Social Research Consultants
Office: 808-956-6754
Home: 808-262-5797