A bill to be entitled

An act relating to nursing and allied health professions; providing legislative findings; creating the Workforce Development Commission on the Critical Shortage in Nursing and Allied Health Professions within the Department of Education; providing commission duties and responsibilities; requiring a report to the Governor and to legislative officials; providing for commission membership, organization, meetings, procedures, staff, and reimbursement; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

(1) This state is experiencing a nursing shortage that could have serious consequences for the delivery of health care in the state.

(2) The average age of registered nurses in this state is 45 years. The number of nurses who retire each year is increasing, while the number of new nursing graduates is stable.

(3) As the baby boom population ages, the need for a larger nursing workforce will increase dramatically.

(4) Waiting times for students who are interested in enrolling in nursing programs are unacceptably long and are not consistent with the needs of the state.

(5) The state may use alternative strategies such as increasing full-time-equivalent-student funding, grants, and...
loan-forgiveness programs; recruiting and funding efforts to increase nursing and allied health program faculty to meet the state's current and future needs for licensed nurses and unlicensed allied health professionals; and encouraging school-age children to enter nursing and allied health professions.

Section 2. There is created within the Department of Education the Workforce Development Commission on the Critical Shortage in Nursing and Allied Health Professions.

(1) COMMISSION DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.--The commission must examine alternative strategies and develop a plan for:

(a) Significantly increasing the number of students graduating from nursing programs and allied health programs in order to meet the state's current and future needs for licensed nursing and unlicensed allied health professionals, including the economic implications of the state's failure to do so.

(b) Providing specialty training to licensed nurses, including, but not limited to, training in the nursing specialty areas of critical-care, emergency, geriatric, obstetric, pediatric, neonatal intensive-care, and operating-room nursing.

(c) Recruiting and funding efforts to increase nursing and allied health program faculty to meet the state's current and future needs for licensed nursing and unlicensed allied health personnel.

(d) Establishing mentoring programs for nursing and allied health students.

(e) Encouraging school-aged children to consider careers in nursing and allied health.

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.
(2) REPORT OF FINDINGS.--The commission shall provide a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than February 1, 2002. In its report, the commission shall address and make specific findings regarding existing strategies for promoting an adequate nursing workforce for the needs of the state and any economic incentives for the promotion of this goal with industry officials.

(3) MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, MEETINGS, PROCEDURES, STAFF.--

(a) The Workforce Development Commission on the Critical Shortage in Nursing and Allied Health Professions shall consist of:

1. The Chancellor of the Board of Regents or his or her designee, who shall chair the commission.

2. One representative from each of the following agencies or organizations: postsecondary institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Nonpublic Career Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities; the Board of Nursing; the Department of Health; organizations representing licensed nurses; organizations representing hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other employers of registered nurses and of unlicensed allied health personnel; board-approved nursing programs; and other interested groups.

3. One registered nurse licensed in this state, appointed by the Secretary of Health.

4. Two representatives from licensed schools who provide postsecondary training of unlicensed allied health professionals.
(b) The commission shall be staffed by the Board of Regents or the successor agency that has the responsibilities currently assigned to the Board of Regents. Sponsoring organizations must fund the travel and related expenses of their respective appointed members of the commission. Travel and related expenses for members of the commission who are sponsored by a state agency shall be reimbursed by the state pursuant to section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

Section 3. The sum of $250,000 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for fiscal year 2001-2002, to be used in carrying out the provisions of this act.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

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SENATE SUMMARY
Creates the Workforce Development Commission on the Critical Shortage in Nursing and Allied Health Professions within the Department of Education. Provides commission duties and responsibilities. Requires the commission to report to the Governor and to legislative officials. Provides for commission membership, organization, meetings, procedures, staff, and reimbursement for expenses. Provides an appropriation.

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