



May 18, 2011

The Honorable Senfronia Thompson
Texas House of Representatives
Office No. 3S.6

Re: Setting S.B. 794 by Nelson/S.King on Local and Consent Calendar

Dear Representative Thompson:

The Texas Hospital Association and Texas Nurses Association respectfully request that Senate Bill 794 by Sen. Jane Nelson and Rep. Susan King be set on the Local and Consent Calendar. The Higher Education Committee favorably reported and recommended the bill for the Local and Consent Calendar on May 11.

Since 2001, certain tobacco lawsuit settlement funds have been dedicated to nursing education, but that dedication will expire on Aug. 31. S.B. 794 extends the dedication until 2015. Only the income from the trust fund is appropriated, and the estimated income for the 2012-13 biennium is \$5-6 million.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board uses the money for the Nursing Innovative Grant Program which provides funding to nursing schools that "propose to address the shortage of registered nurses by developing new activities and projects that will promote innovation in the education of initial RN licensure nursing students and of faculty who would teach in initial RN licensure programs." The projects funded through the Nursing Innovative Grant Program include:

- Use of B.S.N.-prepared faculty to serve as clinical instructors for simulation labs;
- Use of preceptorships for clinical rotations;
- Accelerated program for LVNs to become RNs;
- An early recognition and intervention program for at-risk nursing students;
- Accelerated B.S.N. program (15 months) for second degree students; and
- Regional clinical placement systems.

Texas continues to face a shortage of RNs, and passage of S.B. 794 will help address that shortage by permitting continuation of the Nursing Innovative Grant Program and the identification of best practices for addressing the shortage.

The expiring provision also includes authorization for community colleges and independent and private universities to participate in the Nursing Innovative Grant Program. S.B. 794 extends this authorization also.

THA and TNA respectively request that S.B. 794 be set on the Local and Consent Calendar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Stultz".

Dan Stultz, M.D., FACP, FACHE
President/CEO
Texas Hospital Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clair B. Jordan".

Clair B. Jordan, MSA, RN
Executive Director
Texas Nurses Association