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LB 146

states are facing across the nation. In five to ten years, Nebraska could lose up to 25 percent of its nurses to retirement. This shortage is exacerbated by the limited capacity in our nursing schools due to a lack of faculty. We are actually turning away the very nursing students we need because there are not enough educators. LB 146 seeks to increase nurses to attend master's and doctoral programs to prepare them to be instructors. Under this bill, nurses can apply for a loan of up to \$5,000 per year for three years. Applicants must agree to teach full-time in a nursing program for two years for each year they receive a loan. The loan would be forgiven if the recipient completes this agreement. If the recipient drops out or quits full-time teaching early, the loan must be repaid with interest. I have had distributed to you a copy of a recent Omaha World-Herald article that discusses the nursing shortage. I feel it's a very good piece of material. The shortage is well-known in the nursing field, but few people outside the profession realize what we are about to face. Allow me to highlight a few points from research by the Nebraska Center for Nursing. In 2000, the Federal Bureau of Health Professions estimated that there was a shortage of 110,000, or 6 percent, in the demand for full-time registered nurses. This is nationwide, 110,000 shortage of nurses. This...it projects that shortages in 2005, this year, will be 150,000 shortage of nurses. That's across the entire field of nursing or where nurses play a part. In 2010, there will be a shortage of 275,000 nurses nationwide; 2015, 507,000 nurses that would be needed in the nation; and the number in 2020 will be 808,000 nurses, 808,000 nurses. A 2003 report by the American Association of College of Nurses found more than 11,000 qualified applicants to bachelorette (sic) and higher degree programs were not accepted. At the same time, enrollment increased by 16.6 percent between Fall 2002 and Fall 2003. Associate degree programs also turned students away. More faculty is needed to educate more nurses; however, faculty vacancies already exist in Nebraska and across the nation. The average age of nursing faculty at retirement is 62.5 years, and the average age of current doctoral prepared faculty is 53.5 years. In Nebraska, the average age of nurses with a doctorate is 53 years. The average age of those holding a master's degree is 47, so you see the maturity in the nursing field. We have a