

House Bill 475 (RULES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Cooper of the 41<sup>st</sup>, Harbin of the 118<sup>th</sup>, Lindsey of the 54<sup>th</sup>, Houston of the 170<sup>th</sup>, Wilkinson of the 52<sup>nd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to the "Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act," so as to revise certain  
3 provisions relating to requirements for registered professional nurses in nontraditional  
4 nursing education programs; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and  
5 for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
9 "Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act," is amended by revising Code Section  
10 43-26-7, relating to requirements for licensure as a registered professional nurse, as follows:  
11 "43-26-7.

12 (a) Any applicant who meets the requirements of this Code section shall be eligible for  
13 licensure as a registered professional nurse.

14 (b) An applicant for licensure by examination shall:

15 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

16 (2) Have graduated from a nursing education program approved by the board or which  
17 meets criteria similar to, and not less stringent than, those established by the board. For  
18 purposes of this paragraph, a nontraditional nursing education program that:

19 (A) Provides concurrent instruction in theory along with clinical teaching and clinical  
20 practice for its program participants;

21 (B) Requires that program participants complete a minimum of 350 hours of clinical  
22 practice if the applicant entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a  
23 licensed practical nurse or 700 hours of clinical practice for any other applicants;

24 (C) Arranges the participant's clinical practice in such settings and with such  
25 supervision as approved by the board; and

26 (D) Only accepts licensed practical nurses licensed in states with requirements for such  
 27 licensure equivalent to or greater than Georgia requirements into the program  
 28 shall be deemed to meet criteria similar to, and not less stringent than, those established  
 29 by the board. For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'nontraditional nursing education  
 30 program' means a program which provides instruction in theory primarily by self-study,  
 31 including online courses, and the term 'clinical practice' means face-to-face supervised  
 32 clinical instruction with actual patients in a variety of patient settings, including, but not  
 33 limited to, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, emergency, and  
 34 mental illness. Students who, before July 1, 2008, entered a nontraditional nursing  
 35 education program which does not meet the requirements of this paragraph and complete  
 36 such program no later than December 31, 2010, shall be deemed to meet the criteria of  
 37 this paragraph. A nontraditional nursing education program which does not meet the  
 38 requirements of this paragraph and which solicits students in Georgia shall provide notice  
 39 to its students in its applications and letters of acceptance that such program may be  
 40 amended to include a requirement to complete clinical teaching and clinical practice to  
 41 comply with Georgia law for students graduating after December 31, 2010;

42 (3) Pass a board recognized licensing examination; provided, however, that such  
 43 examination may not be taken prior to graduation from the nursing education program;  
 44 (4) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
 45 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as  
 46 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
 47 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
 48 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
 49 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
 50 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
 51 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
 52 performance of such background check; and  
 53 (5) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

54 (c) An applicant for licensure by endorsement shall:

55 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;  
 56 (2) Have passed a board recognized licensing examination following graduation from a  
 57 nursing education program, including a nontraditional program, approved by the board  
 58 or which meets criteria similar to, and not less stringent than, those established by the  
 59 board;  
 60 (3) Submit verification of initial and current licensure in any other licensing jurisdiction  
 61 administering a board recognized licensing examination;

62 (4)(A) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time  
63 as determined by the board or have graduated from a nursing education program within  
64 the four years immediately preceding the date of the application;

65 (B) If graduated from a nontraditional nursing education program, have practiced  
66 nursing as a registered professional nurse in a clinical setting for at least one year  
67 preceding the date of the application and such practice is documented by the applicant  
68 and approved by the board; or

69 (C) If graduated from a nontraditional nursing education program, have practiced  
70 nursing as a registered professional nurse in a clinical setting for less than one year  
71 preceding the date of the application and such practice is documented by the applicant  
72 and approved by the board, such applicant shall be authorized and required to complete  
73 300 clinical nursing hours to meet the requirements of this paragraph;

74 For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'nontraditional nursing education program'  
75 means a program which provides instruction in theory primarily by self-study, including  
76 online courses, and the term 'clinical practice' means face-to-face supervised clinical  
77 instruction with actual patients in a variety of patient settings, including, but not limited  
78 to, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, emergency, and mental  
79 illness.

80 (5) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
81 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as  
82 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
83 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
84 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
85 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
86 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
87 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
88 performance of such background check; and

89 (6) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

90 (d) An applicant for reinstatement who has previously held a valid license in Georgia shall:

91 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

92 (2) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time as  
93 determined by the board or have graduated from a nursing education program approved  
94 by the board or which meets criteria similar to, and not less stringent than, those  
95 established by the board within the four years immediately preceding the date of the  
96 application;

97 (3) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
98 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as

99 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
100 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
101 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
102 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
103 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
104 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
105 performance of such background check; and  
106 (4) Meet such other criteria as established by the board."

107

**SECTION 2.**

108 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.