



Senate Fiscal Agency
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Senate Bill 1172 (as enacted)
Sponsor: Senator Raymond E. Basham
House Committee: Health Policy

PUBLIC ACT 15 of 2010

Date Completed: 5-3-10

RATIONALE

In February 2010, nursing graduate Katie Viger passed away after developing an aggressive form of brain cancer. She had been diagnosed several days before she was scheduled to take the State nursing exam and was unable to do so because of her illness. Following the diagnosis, one of her college instructors sought an honorary nursing license for Katie from the Department of Community Health (DCH), which evidently responded that it did not have the authority to issue such a license. It was suggested that the law should allow the DCH to issue an honorary nursing license under these circumstances.

CONTENT

The bill amended Part 172 (Nursing) of the Public Health Code to authorize the Department of Community Health, in consultation with the Michigan Board of Nursing, to issue an honorary nursing license to an individual, living or deceased, who meets all the requirements of Part 172 to be eligible for a license except for passage of an examination, and who is unable to take the exam due to advanced illness. An honorary license does not confer any right to engage in the practice of nursing.

("Advanced illness" means the term as defined in Section 5653 of the Code, i.e., a medical or surgical condition with significant functional impairment that is not reversible by curative therapies and that is anticipated to progress toward death despite attempts at curative therapies or modulation.)

The section the bill added may be referred to as "Katie Viger's Law".

The bill took effect on March 18, 2010.

MCL 333.17231

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The bill will serve as Katie Viger's legacy and provide a measure of recognition for others who strive to become nurses, only to have their goals derailed by a fatal illness. People facing a diagnosis likely to result in death are often purpose-driven and wish to make the most of the time they have left. The honorary license will acknowledge the accomplishments of Katie Viger and other terminally ill students of nursing, a field characterized by compassion. The bill will enable them to fulfill their aspiration to become licensed before passing away, or allow them to be recognized with a license posthumously.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Steve Angelotti

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.