

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 314

Expressing the sense of the Senate that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued commemorating registered nurses.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 2002

Mr. CLELAND submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued commemorating registered nurses.

Whereas registered nurses comprise the largest health care work force in the United States, numbering more than 2,700,000;

Whereas registered nurses are integral to health care across human lifespan, from the nurse midwives who attend deliveries, to staff nurses who care for us during times of acute injury or illness, to geriatric nurse practitioners who manage end-of-life care;

Whereas nursing is a rewarding profession that offers diverse career paths for men and women;

Whereas registered nurses provide direct patient care and manage teams of medical professionals in hospitals, clinics, community health centers, offices, nursing homes, and the homes of patients;

Whereas there is a growing disparity between the supply of and demand for registered nurses that is leading to an overwhelming shortage that will place great strains on our health care system;

Whereas this burgeoning shortage represents confluence of powerful demographic and social forces, including declining nursing school enrollment and increased exodus from the profession;

Whereas the lack of young people in nursing has resulted in a steady and dramatic increase in the average age of a registered nurse in the United States;

Whereas the average age of a working registered nurse is 43 years, meaning that the nursing workforce is aging at twice the rate of other occupations in the United States;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 331,000 registered nurses, or 15 percent of the current workforce, will retire between 1998 and 2008;

Whereas the health care needs of the Nation are expected to increase greatly as the baby boom generation reaches retirement age;

Whereas a recent survey of hospitals across the Nation concluded that nursing shortages are already causing emergency department overcrowding, emergency department diversions, increase waiting time for surgery, discontinued patient care programs or reduced service hours, delayed discharges, and canceled surgeries;

Whereas 4 agencies under the Department of Health and Human Services recently demonstrated the relationship between registered nurses and patient care in a study that found strong and consistent evidence that increased registered nurse staffing directly relates to decreases in the incidence of urinary tract infections, pneumonia, shock, and upper gastrointestinal bleeding, and decreases in the length of hospital stays;

Whereas the Institute of Medicine and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have recently released reports detailing the need for increased registered nurse care in nursing facilities;

Whereas the American Nurses Association has identified a need to improve the recognition of the value of nursing and the image of the nursing profession;

Whereas registered nurses did not hesitate to respond to the extraordinarily dangerous situations resulting from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, putting their own lives at risk and acting heroically to help save as many lives as possible in the impact zones; and

Whereas registered nurses have historically cared for patients regardless of the risks of war, violence, or of contracting debilitating illnesses: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.**

3 It is the sense of the Senate that—

4 (1) the United States Postal Service should
5 issue a postage stamp commemorating registered
6 nurses; and

