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# HOUSE BILL No. 1278

Proposed Changes to January 20, 2026 printing by AM127802

## DIGEST OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Graduate programs. Adds SB 68 which requires each state educational institution that offers a two year graduate degree program in mental or behavioral health to evaluate the graduate degree program to determine the feasibility of providing the program in a specifically structured manner to allow full-time students to complete the program within: (1) one year; or (2) five years if the program is combined with a baccalaureate degree program. Requires certain state educational institutions to offer at least one graduate degree program in one or more certain disciplines that is structured to allow full-time students to complete the program within: (1) one year; or (2) five years if the program is combined with a baccalaureate degree program. Requires certain state educational institutions to report to the commission for higher education (commission) regarding the graduate degree programs. Requires the commission to post the submitted reports on the commission's website.

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A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning professions and occupations.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:*

1     [ SECTION 1. IC 21-41-18 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE  
2     AS A NEW CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
3     JULY 1, 2026]:  
4       Chapter 18. Graduate Programs in Mental or Behavioral  
5       Health  
6       Sec. 1. This chapter does not apply to Ivy Tech Community  
7       College or Vincennes University.  
8       Sec. 2. Each state educational institution that offers a two (2)  
9       year graduate degree program in mental or behavioral health shall  
10       evaluate the graduate degree program to determine the feasibility,  
11       if any, of providing the graduate degree program in a specifically  
12       structured manner to allow a full-time student to complete the

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1                   graduate degree within:

2                   (1) one (1) year; or

3                   (2) five (5) years if the graduate degree program is combined  

4                   with a baccalaureate degree program.

5                   Sec. 3. Not later than July 1, 2028, each state educational  

6                   institution shall offer at least one (1) graduate degree program in  

7                   one (1) or more of the following disciplines that is specifically  

8                   structured to allow a full-time student to complete the graduate  

9                   degree as described in section 2(1) or 2(2) of this chapter:

10                   (1) Social work.

11                   (2) Clinical addiction counseling.

12                   (3) Mental health counseling.

13                   (4) Marriage and family therapy.

14                   (5) School counseling.

15                   (6) Counseling.

16                   (7) Psychology.

17                   Sec. 4. (a) Not later than November 1, 2028, each state  

18                   educational institution shall report to the commission for higher  

19                   education, in a form prescribed by the commission for higher  

20                   education, information regarding each graduate degree program  

21                   that the state educational institution is offering in compliance with  

22                   section 3 of this chapter.

23                   (b) Not later than November 1, 2032, each state educational  

24                   institution shall report to the commission for higher education, in  

25                   a form prescribed by the commission for higher education, the  

26                   following information for each graduate degree program described  

27                   in section 3 of this chapter offered by the state educational  

28                   institution:

29                   (1) For each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic  

30                   years, a description of each graduate degree program.

31                   (2) The estimated student cost savings of the graduate degree  

32                   program.

33                   (3) For a graduate degree program that allows completion  

34                   within one (1) year, the number of students:

35                   (A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and

36                   (B) who completed the graduate degree program on  

37                   time;

38                   for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic  

39                   years.

40                   (4) For a graduate degree program combined with a  

41                   baccalaureate degree program that allows for completion  

42                   within five (5) years, the number of students:

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1                   (A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and  
 2                   (B) who completed or are on track to complete the  
 3                   graduate degree program on time;

4                   for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic  
 5                   years.

6                   (5) Any other information requested by the commission for  
 7                   higher education.

8                   (c) The commission for higher education shall post the reports  
 9                   submitted under this section on the commission for higher  
 10                   education's website.

11                   Sec. 5. The commission for higher education may consider  
 12                   graduate degrees described in section 3 of this chapter completed  
 13                   within the time frame described in section 2 of this chapter for the  
 14                   purposes of the higher educational operating funding outcomes  
 15                   based formula created by the commission for higher education  
 16                   under IC 21-18-16-2.

17                   Sec. 6. This chapter expires July 1, 2033.

18                   1 SECTION ~~↔~~[2]. IC 25-23-1-3, AS AMENDED BY  
 19                   P.L.148-2023, SECTION 12, IS AMENDED TO READ AS  
 20                   FOLLOWING [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 3. At any time there is  
 21                   a vacancy or expiration of a term, the Indiana State Nurses  
 22                   Association shall recommend to the governor a list of qualified nurses  
 23                   for appointment to the board in the number of not less than twice the  
 24                   number of:

25                   (1) nurse vacancies to be filled; or

26                   (2) nurse appointments to be made.

27                   SECTION ~~↔~~[3]. IC 25-23-1-20.1, AS AMENDED BY  
 28                   P.L.148-2023, SECTION 16, IS AMENDED TO READ AS  
 29                   FOLLOWING [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 20.1. (a) As used in this  
 30                   section, "eligible~~associate or bachelor's degree registered nursing~~program" means an a practical nursing program or an associate or  
 31                   bachelor's degree registered nursing program that:

32                   (1) is accredited by the board; and

33                   (2) has an annual rate of successful completion of the National  
 34                   Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) score of at least eighty  
 35                   percent (80%).

36                   (b) As used in this section, "nursing program" means any of the  
 37                   following:

38                   (1) A licensed practical nursing program.

39                   (2) An associate degree nursing program.

40                   (3) A diploma nursing program.

41                   (4) A baccalaureate degree nursing program.

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8 (d) A nursing program that:

9 (1) is operated by a postsecondary educational institution, as  
10 defined in IC 21-7-13-6(a)(1);

11 (2) was accredited by the board on a date after June 30, 2020;

12 and

13 (3) has been operating for at least one (1) year;

14 may increase its enrollment rate by not more than one hundred percent

15 (100%).

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