

Resolution Calling on Governor Josh Stein and the North Carolina General Assembly to Protect Nursing and Health Care Workforce Education, Including Care for Veterans

WHEREAS, North Carolina is facing a critical and ongoing shortage of nurses and advanced practice health care professionals, particularly in rural and underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, nurses are essential to the health, safety, and economic stability of North Carolina communities, serving as frontline caregivers in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, public health settings, and behavioral health services; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is home to more than 700,000 veterans who rely on a combination of Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, community-based clinics, rural hospitals, long-term care facilities, and home health providers for their health care; and

WHEREAS, nurses play a critical role in veterans' health care, including in primary care, mental and behavioral health services, long-term care, home-based care, and suicide prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, while the Department of Veterans Affairs is a federal system, veterans' access to timely and quality health care in North Carolina depends heavily on the availability of state-trained and state-licensed nurses working across both VA and non-VA health-care settings; and

WHEREAS, recent federal changes to the classification of certain graduate degree programs for student-loan purposes have reduced access to federal student loans for nursing and other health-care graduate programs, increasing the financial burden on students pursuing advanced nursing education; and

WHEREAS, these changes threaten to discourage qualified students from entering or advancing within the nursing profession, worsening workforce shortages and disproportionately impacting veterans, rural communities, and underserved populations; and

WHEREAS, while the State of North Carolina cannot reverse federal student-loan policy, it does have the authority and responsibility to mitigate the impact of these changes through state-level action;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we call upon Governor Josh Stein to take immediate executive and administrative action, within his authority, to offset the impact of federal student-loan changes on nurses and other health-care professionals, including but not limited to:

- Expanding or prioritizing **state loan-forgiveness and loan-repayment programs** for nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse educators, and other essential health-care workers;
 - Directing relevant state agencies to prioritize **health-care workforce development**, particularly in rural and underserved communities and in settings that serve veterans;
 - Encouraging and facilitating **public-private partnerships** to assist with education and loan-repayment support for nurses practicing in North Carolina.
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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Governor Stein to actively advocate before the North Carolina General Assembly for legislative action to strengthen and expand state support for nursing and health-care education, including:

- Increased funding for **nursing education grants and scholarships**;
- Expanded **loan-repayment programs** tied to service in North Carolina communities, including those serving veterans;
- Increased investment in the **UNC System, community colleges, and nursing faculty** to reduce tuition costs and expand training capacity;
- Policies that recognize nursing education as a critical workforce investment essential to meeting the health-care needs of civilians and veterans alike.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to Governor Josh Stein, members of the North Carolina General Assembly, and relevant state agencies, and that its adoption be publicly shared to demonstrate broad support for protecting North Carolina's nursing and health-care workforce.

Adopted this the
21st Day of March 2026
Burke County Democratic Party Convention
Pamela Genant, Chairman