Is There a Nurse in the House?
Empowering Nurses in Electoral Politics

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INTRODUCTION

- Nurses comprise the largest health care profession in the United States (4 million), yet are grossly underrepresented in elected office
- Nurses' knowledge and expertise makes them well qualified to serve in elected office
- The ANA Code of Ethics obligates nurses to participate in the development of health policy
- Many professions recruit and train their members to run for elected office but there are few resources available to capitalize on nurse's skillset and prepare them to run for elected office

PURPOSE

To engage, inspire, and motivate nurses to run for elected office at the local, state, or federal level

METHODS

Develop a Candidate School for Nurses and Midwives:

- Identified existing candidate training programs and compared the length of training, cost, location, funding, and curriculum (Pearce)
- Conducted 22 interviews of nurse candidates to discover the barriers facilitators experienced in the pursuit of elected office (Gordon)

Pilot a 3 ½ day Candidate School in May 2020:

- Designed a curriculum
- Constructed an application and admissions process
- Recruited 12 faculty including nurse legislators campaign professionals
- Admitted 47 nurses from 23 states
- COVID-19 pandemic declared 3/11/2020; project revised

METHODS

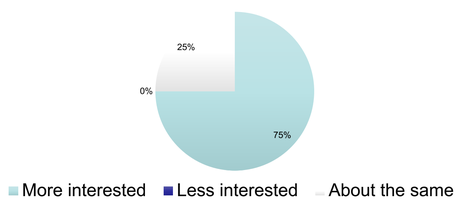
Develop, Implement and Evaluate a Virtual Workshop:

- Conducted a webinar on 2/26/2021 with 4 Candidate School faculty members
- 32 Candidate School applicants attended along with an additional 15 participants who applied to or expressed interest in attending the Candidate School after it was postponed

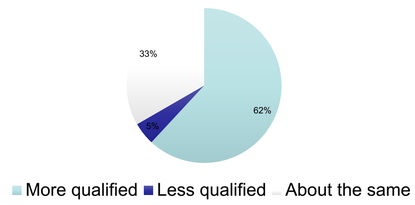
RESULTS

- Participants mirrored the nursing profession's demographics and were primarily white females with an average age of 49 years old
- Evaluations revealed that even limited interaction with nurse legislators inspired and motivated participants run for elected office and made them feel more qualified to do so

After the webinar are you more interested in running for office, less interested, or about the same?



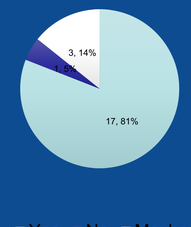
After the webinar, do you feel more qualified to run for office, less qualified, or about the same?



RESULTS

- Analysis of the free-text comments identified a need for more information and a longer, in-person training program (depicted in word cloud)

Do you plan to run for office in the future?



IMPLICATIONS

- While a 2-hour virtual workshop was inspirational, it cannot provide the knowledge and information necessary to run for elected office
- Due to the marked increase in women pursuing elected office since 2016 and the general public's perception of nurses' knowledge and expertise after the COVID-19 pandemic, this is an opportune time to train nurses to run for elected office

SELECTED REFERENCES

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