

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Ashley M. Liersemann, BSN, RN

Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee.

My name is Ashley Liersemann, and I have been a registered nurse for seven years. I am writing to express my strong support for Ohio House Bill 285. Having spent my entire nursing career at the bedside, I have witnessed a drastic change in the expectations and responsibilities placed upon nurses. These demands are even greater for night shift nurses, as we are often left with fewer staff members while caring for the same number of patients as the day shift.

A typical shift on a MedSurg unit often has a 1:6 nurse-to-patient ratio, which can be increased based on the hospital's staffing needs. These high ratios are compromising the safe, quality care that patients deserve. Nurses are constantly being pulled in multiple directions and forced to decide which patient is in more urgent need of their undivided attention. It is unfair to patients to have to wait for care, regardless of the reason, and it is unsustainable for nurses to be overworked, exhausted, stressed, and overwhelmed every time we clock in for our shifts.

"Do no harm" is a fundamental principle of healthcare, yet hospital administration has set us up to fail our patients, their families, and ourselves by enforcing unsafe staffing ratios and work environments. On top of our nursing duties, we are often expected to take on the roles of other departments, all in the name of cutting costs and meeting productivity benchmarks. Instead, the focus should be on the safety, satisfaction, and outcomes of the patients we serve and the well-being of the staff providing their care.

I urge you to require hospitals to establish registered nurse staffing plans to protect patients, residents, and nurses alike. Please pass House Bill 285 to ensure that your loved one is not the next sentinel event.

Thank you,

Ashley M. Liersemann, BSN, RN