

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Cynthia Cloud, RN, BSN, MS, FNP

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Cynthia Cloud, and I have been a registered nurse in Ohio for many years. I graduated from nursing school in 1975, worked as a nurse for 30 years, then returned to school to earn my master's degree. After obtaining my degree, I worked an additional 10 years as a nurse practitioner before retiring in 2019.

Nursing has been both my passion and my career, and it runs in my family. My daughter is currently a registered nurse at The Ohio State University. Throughout my career, I worked in a variety of settings, and one consistent challenge I observed was the pressure to cut nursing salaries and staffing levels. Nursing salaries often represent the largest expense for hospitals, and administrators frequently target them for cost-cutting measures.

At the last hospital where I worked, the administration would reduce staffing levels whenever there was even a whisper of union organizing. This tactic left nurses with dangerously high workloads, creating a work environment where we were stretched so thin that there was no time to even discuss potential improvements. The impact of these practices was profound: my health deteriorated, and, more importantly, patients were not receiving the level of care they needed and deserved.

It is disheartening to realize that the focus of many hospitals seems to be more on protecting their bottom line than on ensuring quality patient care. This approach is unsustainable and detrimental to both patients and the dedicated nurses who care for them.

I urge you to prioritize action on this bill, not only for the well-being of the nursing workforce but also for the safety and care of all future patients, including your own loved ones. Nurses are the backbone of healthcare, and ensuring adequate staffing and fair treatment is essential for the health of our communities.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Cloud, RN, BSN, MS, FNP (Retired)