

**HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act**  
**Proponent Testimony by Cathy Huggins, MSN, RN-BC, CNL, CCRN**

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

My name is Cathy Huggins, and I have proudly served as a registered nurse for the past 30 years. I am writing to express my strong support for legislation mandating safe staffing levels in Ohio hospitals.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed firsthand the relentless demands placed on nurses and healthcare professionals. We are consistently asked to do more with less, working tirelessly to provide safe, thorough, and compassionate care for our patients. However, the conditions we are forced to endure are taking a toll—not only on our profession but on the quality of care our patients receive.

Many dedicated and highly skilled nurses are leaving the bedside, and the consequences are devastating. Our patients are suffering from increases in preventable injuries, complications, and adverse outcomes that could be avoided with appropriate staffing. These results are heartbreaking and completely unacceptable.

Our healthcare system already recognizes the importance of safety regulations in other industries. For example, there are laws mandating that airline pilots and truck drivers adhere to strict safety protocols to protect the public. Hospitals should be held to no less of a standard.

Unfortunately, hospital administrators cannot be trusted to implement safe staffing without mandates. Time and time again, I have seen staffing decisions reduced to a line item in a fiscal budget—a resource to be minimized to increase revenue. This short-sighted approach has worsened over the years and continues to endanger patients and staff alike.

We need legislation to make safe staffing a reality. Mandating safe nurse-to-patient ratios is not just a matter of fairness for healthcare professionals; it is an essential step to protect the well-being of the patients we are called to serve.

Although I am unable to be present in person today due to my work schedule, I hope my testimony adds to the voices advocating for this critical legislation. As a nurse, I know the profound impact this legislation will have on patient safety and the sustainability of our profession.

Thank you for your time and attention to this vital issue.

Respectfully,  
Cathy Huggins, MSN, RN-BC, CNL, CCRN