

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Jessica Shoup, RN

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

My name is Jessica Shoup, and I have been a registered nurse working in the state of Ohio for nine years. During this time, I have worked at a community hospital, a world-renowned hospital recognized for #1 heart care for 30 consecutive years, and most recently at the VA, serving our country's heroes.

I am in shock and awe at the staffing situations that have become standard in this state. The people of Cleveland, Ohio, deserve better. Military heroes who selflessly served the United States of America deserve better.

I have watched nursing ratios become increasingly unsafe, with staffing problems at the heart of it all. Nurses are burned out and turning to travel nursing in states with safe and protected ratios. Many nurses are leaving bedside care in astonishing numbers due to the inability to care for patients appropriately. People are dying because nurses are so overwhelmed by the acute care needed but unable to provide it properly.

On almost a daily basis, I question—and sometimes regret—my decision to become a nurse, even though I love my patients, because it has become impossible to provide the appropriate level of care. I have experienced this both as a caregiver and as a patient in the last year. When my son was in the NICU, I helped provide basic care because the unit was understaffed. This is one of the most vulnerable populations—a premature infant—and yet these nurses were working outside of safe ratios.

I am disgusted by the standards that have become acceptable in the state of Ohio. Would you trust your family—your mother, your child—to be cared for by overworked and stretched-thin caregivers?

Sincerely,
Jessica Shoup, RN
An exhausted nurse