

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Carolyn Jurns DNP, MSN, RN

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

I am writing regarding House Bill 285, requiring safe nurse staffing plans in Ohio's hospitals.

Research consistently demonstrates that adequate staffing literally saves lives. One recent study demonstrated a 16% mortality reduction with nurse improved staffing. [See "Patient outcomes and cost savings associated with hospital safe nurse staffing legislation: an observational study" (Lasater, Aiken, Sloane et al., 2021).]

Additionally, retaining nurses is imperative for the health and well being of all Ohioans. Cleveland.com reported 60% of Ohio nurses who left bedside care cited poor staffing as the cause (see "Large numbers of Ohio nurses say they are leaving bedside care because of being overworked, survey finds" Oct. 30, 2024). A study noted by Reuters stated a third of nurses are considering leaving the profession. (see, "One-third of US nurses plan to quit profession, survey shows" Mandowara and Leo, 2023).

These are a sampling of many studies that demonstrate the same.

To note a very few of my personal experiences (Fairview Hospital, Cleveland): When working on the surgical floor: Due to workload: When I asked another nurse I respected how she was able to leave on time (I generally left at least 30 minutes late, and that was after spending my lunch period and break charting) she said that in order to save time, she combined medication administration times rather than giving than as ordered (this was before computerized charting); I remember feeling literally nauseated going onto the surgical floor knowing that I would have 50% more patients than I could comfortably care for. When working in intensive care: (Though these comments appear to focus on me, please recognize that they actually focus on the fact that nurses are not given the time to properly care for patients); I once volunteered to work overtime due to lack of staffing and worked 20 consecutive hours in the ICU; I once worked a 14 hour shift without using the toilet because my patient was simply too critical to leave and there was no one to relieve me; I have literally jogged through the ICU to get work done faster; I routinely missed lunches and breaks due to workload. In almost any other profession, this would be illegal. These are simply a few examples given in an attempt to give the reader an understanding that nurses, who are more than laborers, but professionals who make literal life and death decisions, are overtaxed. We cannot properly assess, care for, and advocate for an excessive number of patients. Nurses are nurses because we want to care for others. Give us the time we need to care for you, for your loved ones, and for all Ohioans.

I am asking that you please do all you can to support this bill for the health and safety of all Ohioans.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Jurns DNP, MSN, RN