

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Kimberly North, RN

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

My name is Kimberly North and I am registered nurse having worked for 33 years as an intensive care nurse. I am writing today to offer proponent testimony for House Bill 285.

Throughout my career, I have had to make many unsafe assignments as a charge nurse for my staff and have also had many challenging and unsafe assignments as a bedside RN. One of these being a day that I was caring for a ventilated patient who was also receiving continuous bedside dialysis. This patient required diligent attention to monitor, make hourly adjustments and to maintain treatment therapies to avoid unforeseen deterioration. Despite this patient typically being one that should have a nurse/patient ratio of 1 to 1, I was the only RN that day that did not already have 2 patients due to limited staff and inability to plan for appropriate option for admission of another patient. I was the only nurse that day, aside from the charge nurse, that could admit another patient which inevitably did happen. I was asked to admit a polytrauma patient from the emergency department which would require myself and many resources to properly resuscitate, provide countless interventions and transport for several diagnostic tests. Given that the charge nurse and I were both experienced nurses, I agreed to admit this patient while continuing to assume responsibility for care of the first one also, with help from the charge nurse. Unfortunately, this strategy ultimately was not safe for either patient. I was only able to make brief, hourly checks and make appropriate adjustments to the continuous dialysis for the first patient, because the trauma admission also required my full attention. To further compound the already unsafe situation, after my trauma admission, the charge nurse had to admit a post-operative neurosurgery patient. Admitting this type of patient, attempting to assist me, and attending to his responsibilities as a charge nurse does not allow for the attention to detail that all 3 of these patients deserved that day.

Please, I implore you to not let this situation happen to someone that you love. Please pass HB 285.

Sincerely,

Kimberly North, RN