

**HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act**  
**Proponent Testimony by Kara Cross, RN**

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

My name is Kara Cross and I am a registered nurse in the State of Ohio. I have been working in healthcare for almost 15 years. I have worked in Long-term Care, Skilled Rehab, Pediatric Home Health, and I'm currently in a hospital setting as a Floor Nurse/Charge Nurse.

When I first started in my career, I believed the lie. I believed that there's a nursing shortage, that companies and corporations were unable to hire enough staff, and that they were doing the best with what they had. I have since been radicalized, because I have seen firsthand that companies and corporations will always put profits before patient safety. When you have people in the c-suites making millions if not billions of dollars a year, and they ask their employees whom make 200x less than them to dig into their own pockets and donate to the community that they serve so that they can still be seen as fulfilling their nonprofit status, that is a problem. Nurses have always been treated as an expense that needs to be cut, but in the aftermath of the pandemic it has only gotten worse. One night shift I had 9 patients on a Med-Surg Telemetry unit, and when I called my Nurse Operations Manager and told them that this was unsafe, they replied with "Well where do you want me to pull extra staff from?" Only after stating I would be filing an Assignment Despite Objection form and forwarding it to the CNO did we get an extra Nurse for the remainder of my shift.

There is a reason why time after time and year after year nursing is the most trusted profession, we are charged in the 24-hour care of our patients, where as doctors may only spend minutes with them a day. We catch mistakes, we prevent sentinel events, we comfort families, we wear many hats. Yet when the stakes are high, the pay is low and there's no help to be seen from upper management. That is by design, so it is time to go back to the drawing board.

I could list off all of the university studies and all of the research articles that show when a nurse has fewer patients they have better outcomes until I am blue in the face, but these companies and corporations will not care until they are legally required to do so. So I implore you if not for your own sake or for the sake of the general population, but for the sake of your loved ones who will be a patient one. You will want their nurse to devote 100% of their time, energy, compassion, and care into making sure that your loved one does not fall through the cracks. Safe Staffing saves lives, past HB 285!

Kara Cross, RN