

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Vicki Parker, RN BSN

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

I am in favor of safe minimum staffing standards in Ohio.

I have been a bedside RN for 30 years. Through the years, patient acuity has increased on med-surg units, to the point that many patients should be in the ICU. We are trying to provide quality, safe care to these patients with patient to nurse ratios 6:1, which is very difficult to do. Lately, we have 7:1 ratios, which makes it impossible to provide safe care.

The Cleveland Clinic system is initiating this 7:1 ratio, and justifying it by giving us a “resource nurse” who can assist us with passing medications. I find this to be unacceptable. I am still ultimately responsible for the care of 7 high acuity patients. Not only are patients being cheated out of the care they deserve, I sometimes fear that my nursing license is in jeopardy.

A ratio of 4:1 would be ideal for ensuring the best care. A ratio of 5:1 is acceptable, but can still be very exhausting for nurses when the patient acuity level is high. Ratios beyond 5:1 are unacceptable.

Thank you for your time,

Vicki Parker RN BSN