

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

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

I spent a lot of time contemplating what I would say on this matter if ever given the chance. I thought about the numerous stories I could tell about the staffing shortages and how many people I have seen negatively affected by this, but I fear that until it affects a person personally they won't understand. I'm sure that many of my fellow nurses will send you those stories as well. So allow me to paint you a picture, your son or daughter is in a car accident and the hospital staff are able to save their life. They lay in the hospital for days or even weeks. Due to the extent of their injuries they cannot walk yet so anything they need the hospital staff must help them with. It's 2 am and they have an accident on themselves and need cleaned up, but at the same time the nurse who's caring for your child is responding to a code blue and can't come to your child. Imagine that there is only one other nurse on the unit and while your child's nurse is dealing with the emergency that nurse is watching not only her 7 patients but your child's nurse's patients as well. Now with 14 patients to watch. While it's 2 am not all of these patients are asleep. This nurse is running back and forth trying to keep the confused patient from falling out of bed because they keep trying to walk despite not remembering they have a broken hip, and trying to calm down the psych patient who has now decided they want to get violent with the only aide on the floor who has been assigned to sit with them. Now imagine it isn't just an accident your child had that needs to be cleaned up, but instead they can't breathe.

How many case studies proving safe staffing ratios save lives do we need before law makers make a change? Do we need until it's on every news channel until something changes. Each year nurses are leaving the profession due to burnout, and fear of losing their licenses. As nurses we do not fear running into a room to save a life we fear that lawmakers will not support us and buy the agenda that there is a nursing shortage, believe me there is not. We are leaving the bedside in record numbers because it's not safe, for us and for our patients. Please do not wait until something happens to a loved one to make this personal.

I personally have seen units deliberately understaffed when nurses were available and willing to work. Nurses sent home to prove that units can run with less amounts of nurses.

Nurses are willing to work we have shown that time and again, but we need safe staffing ratios. Please help save lives. Just a reminder as well, in the states that have enacted safe staffing laws hospitals are not closing, lives are being saved, so don't let the hospitals agenda change your minds on doing what you have to know is right.

Do it for your children, spouses, parents, and loved ones because I'd hate to hear another meeting like this with one of you telling a story of how understaffing cost you a loved one.

Thank you for your time,

Renee Justus, RN