

HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act
Proponent Testimony by Callahan Dolacki

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

I have lived in Amherst my entire life and am currently a patient care tech and a nursing student at LCCC. Next month, I will be graduating with my Associate's Degree in Nursing. As a student, I have worked at numerous hospitals around the Cleveland area, including Cleveland Clinic in Avon, Fairview, and Euclid, as well as UH Elyria Medical Center. Throughout my time working directly with patients and nurses, I have seen that the nurse-to-patient ratio is often unfair and sometimes dangerous.

In order for nurses to provide safe patient care, they need adequate time to assess their patients, administer medications, and plan care for the day. When nurses are assigned more patients than they can safely manage, mistakes and sentinel events are more likely to occur. For example, when patients receive their anticoagulants late, they are at risk for developing blood clots, which can lead to death. When patients must wait to be assisted to the bathroom, they may get up on their own and fall, breaking bones or hitting their head. When patients are in severe pain, they shouldn't have to wait for analgesia. These are just a few of the preventable risks caused by unsafe staffing levels.

I think my coworkers and I would agree that the ultimate goal every day is to ensure our patients are safe, yet nurses today are experiencing burnout like never before. Many don't even feel safe taking their lunch break because they don't want to leave their patients with the few staff members available to monitor them. As a tech, I am often running from room to room because the nurses are unable to assist due to their continuous workload of passing medications, speaking to providers, and charting every single thing they do.

For the better health of our community and staff members, I strongly believe the bill should be passed. As a nursing student who will officially be working as a nurse on February 15th, I truly hope this legislation is enacted to address these dangerous conditions and allow nurses to provide the safe, high-quality care our patients deserve.

Callahan Dolacki
Nursing Student