

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

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

I have been an Emergency Room nurse at a County, Level 1 Trauma center in Cleveland for 22 years. I am in support of HB 285 as I have had a nurse to patient ratio of 1:12 at many times. When nurses are sent to traumas, strokes, full arrests, etc. we have to take care of their patients, thereby leaving us with a 1:12 ratio. This isn't just a one time thing, this happens routinely. I have sent emails after emails going up my chain of command to no avail. Our current pod assignment is a 1:6 ratio. This is a 66 bed ER, and we see over 100,000 patients a year. I have had times where I alone have had 5 ICU patients in addition to 3 other patients at one time. This is very unsafe for the patient. Hospitals keeps getting away with high nurse to patient ratios because they know they can. We have been told that if we don't want to take an unsafe assignment, which we have a right to do, we can go home without pay, which would then leave a higher nurse to patient ratio with someone else. Hospitals need to be held accountable for bad outcomes for these patients, not the nurses because we have been advocating for our patients and our own licenses for years, but they don't care as long as it saves them money. There needs to a balance. I have kept all my emails over the years and you are more than welcome to see them to see how unsafe they are.

Just think if it was your loved one sitting in their own urine or feces for hours because we do not have adequate staffing to help them. Obviously in nursing you have to do things by priority, which means those patients sit unfortunately. When we have ratios like this, have seen some horrendous outcomes: falls requiring surgery and in some cases even death.

In the ED I work, our nurses are sent to traumas, strokes, full arrests, etc. thereby leaving their pod partner with 12 patients. There needs to be set standards for this. I suggest 1:4 or 1:5 in EDs, AND there should be designated nurses who get sent to those traumas, strokes, full arrests, etc. so that nurses do not have to cover other nurses' patients. Additionally, I have not had a lunch in over 2 years. I cannot leave 12 patients to one nurse just so I can eat, so I do not go.

Please pass HB285 and please come up with fair ED ratios, and make hospitals implement it ASAP!

Thank you.

Elizabeth Wolfe