

## **HB 285 – Nurse Workforce & Safe Patient Care Act Proponent Testimony by Kately Davis, RN**

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

My name is Katelyn, and I am currently a Registered Nurse in Ohio. I come from a small town where I was born and raised. I graduated from high school and a Career and Technical Center. While attending the career center, I was in a Health Academy program where I obtained my STNA license before graduating my senior year. This officially started my journey into healthcare. I then went on to obtain my LPN license in 2017 and proceeded to earn my RN in 2021.

I have spent a total of seven years working in long-term and skilled nursing facilities. Taking care of the elderly has always been a passion of mine. During these seven years, staffing has always been the biggest issue. Staffing makes a significant difference in patient care and is essential to saving lives. Working in long-term care facilities, there are no safe nurse-to-patient ratios. I have taken care of 25–42 patients on my own as a nurse, with only two STNAs to assist. It's impossible and unsafe for both the patients and the staff.

As nurses and STNAs, we have a duty to care for the sick and elderly when they are no longer able to care for themselves. In a perfect nursing world, no patient would have to wait an extended amount of time to use the toilet, to be fed, or to receive pain medication. But the reality is that these patients are waiting to the point where they have soiled themselves, are doubled over in pain, or are upset because their meal is now cold. They are calling family members who, in turn, become angry and cruel toward staff because their loved ones had to wait for care.

Realistically, it's impossible to thoroughly provide adequate care when one nurse has 25 or more patients. Not every patient is the same—some require significantly more assistance than others. We need adequate staff-to-patient ratios so we can provide the high-quality care these patients are paying for. As nurses, we need time to assess skilled patients thoroughly because it is essential to saving lives. Instead, we are forced to rush through care for many patients, and that's when life-saving measures can be missed.

Safe staffing can prevent falls that result in fractures, breaks, and head injuries; skin breakdown and wounds; weight loss and malnutrition; and improper assessment of high-acuity skilled patients. It is essential to the overall well-being of the elderly men and women in our care. Nurses and STNAs are overwhelmed and overloaded. We urgently need safe staffing in all facilities and hospitals to provide the quality care our patients deserve.

Kately Davis, RN