

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

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

My name is Kelly Huff, and I am a registered nurse with over 11 years of experience. I am writing to share my personal perspective on the critical importance of safe staffing in healthcare settings.

At the age of 56, I made the difficult decision to step away from nursing—a career I pursued out of a genuine love for caring for others. I was fortunate not to depend on my work to pay bills, but many nurses do not have that same privilege. Safe staffing is a massive issue, and it is vital for more people to understand its profound impact on both nurses and patients.

Throughout my career, I often felt that my license and ability to provide safe, effective care were at risk due to unsafe staffing levels. Patient safety is supposed to be the highest priority, and management frequently emphasizes this. However, in practice, nurses are consistently asked to handle workloads that exceed reasonable limits. This situation is not only deeply frustrating for nurses who strive to do their best, but also for patients and their families, who rightfully expect and deserve quality care.

I have also experienced the consequences of inadequate staffing from a personal perspective. Recently, my mother underwent a partial hip replacement and required care in both a hospital and a memory care facility. The care she received was so inadequate that our family had to ensure someone was with her nearly 24 hours a day. During the brief six hours a day we could not be present, she fell twice at the memory care facility and once in the hospital emergency room while awaiting a CT scan after a previous fall.

These experiences underscore the absolute necessity of safe staffing—not just for nurses, but for patients and their families. The demands and stress of the current system are driving more and more seasoned, devoted nurses away from bedside care. This is a trend we cannot afford to ignore.

I respectfully urge you to pass legislation mandating safe staffing levels. Such action is critical to safeguarding the well-being of patients and preserving the nursing workforce that is vital to our healthcare system.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

Kelly Huff, RN, BSN
Grove City, Ohio