



May 3, 2016

Good Afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Minority Member Driehaus, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for allowing me to be here today. My name is Barb Nash and I am a registered nurse and the Deputy Executive Officer of Government Relations and Member Engagement for the Ohio Nurses Association. I am here today to testify on behalf of our association on the proposed amendment potentially being added to House Bill 483. The Ohio Nurses Association has concerns about this proposed amendment potentially being added into House Bill 483 and we respectfully request that it not be added so that it can be considered as a separate, stand-alone bill outside the MBR.

First, we would like to acknowledge and applaud the administration, specifically the Department of Developmental Disabilities, in their efforts to bring health care to more individuals with disabilities so they may live a quality life outside of institutional settings. As registered nurses, we realize all Ohioans are receiving more health care and services in our communities, and individuals with disabilities are no exception. We, like you, want to ensure all people in our state receive the quality, affordable health care they need. With this movement, we want to thank the Department of Developmental Disabilities for approaching and meeting with the Ohio Nurses Association and the Ohio Board of Nursing. The Department realizes and acknowledges the nurses role in the health care setting and we appreciate the interested party meetings that explained the provisions included within House Bill 483 and the thoughtful responses we received that addressed our questions and concerns.

For years, we have been told to expect a nursing shortage by the year 2020 because of the influx of people entering the system, however, our state continues to educate and license not only registered nurses, but licensed practical nurses by the thousands each year. The Ohio Board of Nursing published the Ohio Workforce Data Summary Reports for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses in 2015 and 2014 respectively. Each report shares information about who our licensed individuals are, what their highest level of education is, where they are working, and how many are unemployed. The 2015 Workforce Data Summary Report shows that we currently have 183,188 registered nurses licensed to practice in the state, with

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13,829 being new licensees. The 2014 Workforce Data Summary Report shows that we currently have 49,641 licensed practical nurses licensed to practice in the state. The Ohio Board of Nursing states that “[...] since 2009, newly licensed registered nurses and licensed practical nurses in Ohio have increased by an average of 15,233”.

Through a very preliminary conversation with a nursing home association representative, the reason they cite a need for this amendment is because they are having difficulty obtaining skilled registered nurses to work in intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID). It is our initial understanding that ICF/IID facilities would like to fill this nursing shortage gap with more MR/DD personnel and certified medication aides.

With all due respect to these two groups of health care workers, their role does not replace that of registered nurses. According to the Ohio Board of Nursing 2015 Annual Report, there are only 184 medication aides certified to practice in Ohio. By expanding their practice to ICF/IID facilities, it does not fix the problem of obtaining skilled registered nurses, nor can MR/DD personnel and medication aides replace the role of registered nurses.

In conclusion, ONA is not opposed to the amendment language in and of itself. However, we are very concerned with having this conversation in the context of the MBR and believe that additional questions brought forward by ONA and the Ohio Board of Nursing reinforces the need for having the amendment stand as a separate piece of legislation. Both the Ohio Nurses Association and the Ohio Board of Nursing believe this discussion requires an in-depth dialogue between the nursing home association, the Ohio Board of Nursing, the Ohio Nurses Association, and the Department of Developmental Disabilities, outside of House Bill 483. Thank you for your time and consideration.