



**Todd A. Diacon**

*President*

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 673  
Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee  
December 1, 2020  
Todd Diacon, President  
Kent State University**

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the General Government and Agency Review Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 673. Thank you also for your work on behalf of the citizens of the state of Ohio during the pandemic.

Kent State University graduates 400 Bachelor of Science in Nursing and over 200 Associate of Applied Science in Nursing students annually who are prepared to practice safely as registered nurses. HB 673 continues, until July 1, 2021, the suspension of the requirement that an applicant pass a licensure examination (NCLEX) to receive a license to practice as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse. This bill specifies that a nursing license issued without examination is valid until July 1, 2021; and requires the Ohio Board of Nursing to count hours worked under a temporary license, issued without examination, towards any clinical experience that must be completed before a nurse is eligible to take the licensure examination, when the temporary license expires.

HB 673 supports Kent State University's ability to continue to supply knowledgeable and safe registered nurses during the continued surge of COVID infections. With clinical affiliations in Cleveland and Summit, Portage, and Stark counties, the university is aware of the challenges faced by our practice partners: high numbers of professional caregivers, including nurses, who are unable to work due to active COVID infection and postponement of elective surgeries to manage the surge of the virus. We are working with our partners to develop learning experiences that provide for patient safety and graduate nurse satisfaction. An example of this is an invitation we received to work with hospitals in Stark County to support nursing units with student/faculty staffed clinical teams to complement existing hospital staff in order to meet the growing needs of patients while supporting caregivers. This approach to nursing education creates an additional educational tool that provides safe and strong clinical decision making and technical skills development prior to students being able to sit for the licensing exam.

**Office of the President**

The message is clear to us. If we do not continue to provide educated nurses with the opportunity to practice before taking their NCLEX exam, we will not have the needed personnel to care for Ohioans safely.

Extending the date on HB 673 to July 1, 2021 allows for Kent State University to continue vital support for the health of Ohioans by maintaining a pipeline of safe and well-prepared practitioners while addressing the challenges that Colleges of Nursing in higher education face. Specifically, uncertain clinical experiences that are impacted daily by surging cases of active COVID infection, coupled with health systems' contraction of elective procedures to manage COVID census; uncertain graduate nurse (NCLEX) test scheduling and testing site availability; and graduate nurse attrition due to inability to work without a license.

With the shrinking number of available caregivers, the obvious reduction in nursing resources as a result of the pandemic surge, and the continued dedication of those committed to nursing, Kent State University believes that this legislation allows the university to work with the state to provide safe effective care. We request that graduate nurse licenses continue to be extended through July 2021 without the requirement to take the NCLEX exam first and that provisions for flexibility of nursing programs to meet the needs of students continues with full support of the OBN during nursing program accreditation processes.

Chairman Schuring and members of the committee, I thank you for taking the time to review this testimony on behalf of Kent State University in support of House Bill 673. Please feel free to contact me or members of our Office of Government and Community Relations directly with any questions or comments that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Diacon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Todd Diacon  
President