



College of Health Professions
Mary Gladwin Hall
Akron, OH 4325

November 25, 2020

The Honorable Kirk Schuring, Chair
Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee

Chair Schuring and members of the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee, thank you for your work for the state of Ohio during this critical time.

My name is Dr. Marlene Huff, and I am Associate Dean, Professor, and Director of the School of Nursing at The University of Akron. I submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 673, which would benefit our nursing students and our community during this COVID-19 crisis.

House Bill 673 is exactly what is needed at this critical time in Ohio's fight against COVID-19. Our School of Nursing has produced 225 graduates over the past year, and we currently have about 800 students enrolled. Our students and graduates serve in a variety of health-related fields. They care for the sick and injured, including those infected with COVID-19. We appreciate Representative Roemer's recognition and desire to help our students earn a credential, graduate in a healthcare field, and then join the workforce to, literally, save the lives of others.

As Director of the School of Nursing at The University of Akron, I support the provisions in House Bill 673 that continue, until July 1, 2021, including the suspension of the requirement that an applicant pass a licensure examination to receive a license to practice as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse; that specifies that a nursing license issued without examination is valid until July 1, 2021; and that requires the Nursing Board 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.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, many nursing students across the state were negatively impacted, especially those who were nearing graduation and initially lost the ability to do clinical work at hospitals. However, with the enactment of House Bill 197, which took effect on March 27, a great degree of flexibility was granted that led to more nurses, graduates of our public universities, being placed in the workforce. It enabled them to get to the front line in the fight against the virus more quickly and, in some cases, after graduation but prior to being officially licensed by the Board of Nursing. Now, House Bill 673 would essentially do the same thing and extend those deadlines established in the previous legislation. This bill recognizes the value of those individuals in the fight against COVID-19 and that the need for their assistance is still great. House Bill 673 would facilitate that goal, making it easier for our students to get the training they need now and to join the workforce as soon as possible.

I support the continuation of these policies and the flexibility granted by this legislation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marlene Huff
Associate Dean, Professor, School Director