

March 24, 2021

House Commerce & Labor Committee  
Chairman Dick Stein  
Ohio Statehouse  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 163- Nurse Overtime

Dear Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide support for House Bill 163, a bill aimed to prohibit the use of nurse mandatory overtime as a condition of employment. My name is Dr. Gina M. Severino and I am a registered nurse and a Doctor of Nursing Practice.

Nursing overtime, both mandatory and voluntary, is prevalent in the healthcare industry and is often used to manage staffing shortages and high census events. The current research indicates that long work hours can lead to adverse nurse and patient outcomes. The Institute of Medicine recommends, nurses work no more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period and no more than 60 hours in a 7-day period to avoid error-producing fatigue. As nurses strive to provide the best care possible to their patients, it is important that they also advocate for a healthy work schedule to prevent errors and promote patient safety. Limits on work hours have been instituted in many high-risk occupations such as aviation, trucking, and marine industries, where long work hours can adversely affect safety, performance, job satisfaction, and quality of life.

As of 2017, the American Nurses Association (ANA) reported that 18 states have mandatory overtime legislation. Most of these state laws mention that staff nurses need reasonable, predetermined schedules, and that once their shifts are scheduled, they cannot be forced to work more hours. Improving the nursing work environment by prohibiting mandatory overtime has the potential to increase the nursing work force. Mandatory overtime occurs most often due to limited staff. Are nurses leaving the profession due to increased workload, short staffing and mandatory overtime? Mandatory overtime is part of a vicious cycle. Mandatory overtime leads to nursing fatigue, which leads to job dissatisfaction, which in turn leads to frequent absenteeism, which leads to job turnover and ultimately leading to increased healthcare costs. It is obvious that hospitals need the flexibility to increase staff in the case of emergencies. This mandatory overtime legislation will not prevent hospitals from requiring nurses to increase work hours in the event of an emergency. There are men and women attending college to pursue nursing degrees, but how can we retain these nurses if we face these workplace challenges?

I fully support HB 163 and ask that this committee vote yes, in support of Ohio nurses and patients. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Gina M. Severino DNP, RN, ACNS-BC*

Dr. Gina M. Severino DNP, RN, ACNS-BC