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Elgin Rogers, Jr.
State Representative

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 285. House Bill 285 is intended to support the nurses of our state and ensure the safety of their patients. It has been referred to as a pro-patient, pro-worker piece of legislation.

To address staffing issues in the nursing field, this legislation creates a $20 million loan-to-grant program that will provide loans to nursing students that become grants upon the completion of a 5-year service requirement. Students will be eligible to receive up to $12,000 over a period of four years. In addition to this grant program that will provide immediate relief to our nursing workforce, this legislation establishes required nurse-to-patient ratios to ensure that our patients are receiving quality care and our nurses are not stretched too thin. These ratios vary between 1:1 and 1:6 depending on hospital unit. Additionally, this legislation provides a set of exceptions to ensure flexibility for hospitals that make efforts to meet the ratios but are unable

due to circumstances out of their control.

Staffing shortages are creating safety issues for our patients. Fatality rates increase 7% for every additional patient a nurse takes on. Addressing these shortages is truly a matter of life or death.

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, and Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to present Sponsor testimony on House Bill 285. I will now turn it over to my Joint Sponsor, Representative Haraz Ghanbari.