

LD 1639 An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care

Good Morning Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Grant Provost, I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7 and a member of the AFL- CIO Executive Board. I rise in favor of LD 1639 An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care.

I am a proud spouse of a Maine State Nurses Association Member, we are a union family. The hard work my wife put in over the years and sacrifices she made to become a registered nurse are not only inspiring but have left me with a deep level of respect for her commitment to the care of others. My wife, like many other nurses, benched her life for years in the pursuit of her dreams. Dreams of being able to help people when they need it the most. Becoming a nurse requires grueling college schedules which lead to careers where entry points are usually 12-hour overnights that run down the mind and body. The pressures of nursing, the overnights, the long shifts and hours upon hours between meals (that's if you even get a chance to eat during a shift) bleed into one's family life and mental health. The journey is something indescribable to anyone who doesn't endure the same path.

This bill is our chance to tell the many women and men who chose this profession, we have your backs. We recognize the

years of hard work, the daily sacrifices you have made to protect our families and we appreciate it. Maine has no law limiting the number of patients a registered nurse can care for at one time. All stop right there, how is that not dangerous? Although nurses are modern day superheroes, there is a limit to not only what one person can do but what one person should be expected to do.

Speaking from firsthand experience I have not only supported my wife leaving a position due to unsafe staffing, I have encouraged it. Working as the sole floor nurse in a multi-level rehabilitation facility. Her only support nurses were on other floors with a few nurse assistants floating between nurses. It was hard on her mentally, the stress of worrying she wouldn't be prepared for multiple issues happening at the same time or that help would come slowly because the other nurses also were working well past capacity. Just having a patient wonder out of a room and take a fall while you were busy with another is stressful. This situation is just an example of how poor staffing endangers patients and drives nurses from the profession. My wife has a ton of grit and determination, she found another job in a community health center and stayed with it. We should all be thankful for nurses like her, who rise above to stay the course.

With this bill we can safeguard nurses' right to advocate in the exclusive interests of the patients under their care. Alongside protecting nurse whistleblowers who speak out

about assignments that are unsafe for the patient or nurse. Those patients' whom nurses are advocating for are us on our worst days. By undercutting this bill and a nurses' chance to advocate for their patients, you undercut yourself.

I look forward to seeing your unwavering support for our Maine Nurses when you vote this bill ought to pass!!

Appreciate your time,

Grant Provost

207-314-3530

gprovost@iwlocal7.org

Grant Provost
Brunswick
LD 1639

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