

Margaret McRae
Lewiston
LD 1639

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Margaret McRae. I have been a registered nurse for over 40 years with the past 20 years working in Maine. I have had the opportunity to work as an Emergency Nurse, a Critical Care Nurse and currently in nursing leadership. While working clinically, I held certifications in both specialties and now have a Doctorate Degree in Nursing Practice and certified in executive nursing practice. I am a resident of Lewiston and work for MaineHealth Medical Group. I am submitting testimony in opposition of LD 1639.

This bill removes the autonomy as a nurse that I am most proud of including the ability to use the foundation of nursing in the Nursing Process. Core to the delivery of care is the ability to Assess, Plan, Implement, and Evaluate the conditions and needs of our patients, which would include determining the best nursing assignment to meet patient needs. The nursing process allows us as professionals to make decisions about staffing that take in account the unique needs and acuity of each patient. I find this bill in conflict with the fundamental premise that all nurses are leaders and we are part of the decision making process. I have been fortunate in my career to work collaboratively with all members of the healthcare team and provide input to ensure the delivery of safe patient care. Mandated staffing ratios will eliminate that ability and reduce our patients and the nurses that care for them to just a number.

Additionally, there is no evidence to support mandated ratios particularly around quality or safety. What is known is that the healthcare provided in Maine is recognized as being in the top quartile in the country for quality and safety. In comparison, we know that California (the only state with a mandated ratio,) sits in the bottom quartile for quality and care outcomes.

Mandated ratios will not create more nurses, our efforts need to be focused on workforce development, and addressing the capacity at our educational institutions. If this bill is passed, it will however have a negative impact to the health of our communities. Healthcare institutions will have to reduce bed capacity and access to care in order to maintain the recommended ratios. There is currently challenges with bed capacity at both acute and post-acute care beds and mandated ratios will further impact this capacity.

I am requesting that the members of this committee vote ought not to pass on LD 1639. Thank you.