



May 4, 2023

Dear Members of the Labor Committee,

For businesses in Maine a key factor in attracting and retaining employees is ensuring our state is a desirable place to live. An essential part of a high quality of life is access to quality health and hospital care. That’s why we oppose LD 1639, which would impose strict nurse staffing ratios through statute in all hospitals in the state.

The mandated staffing ratios will require hospitals to hire an additional 1,000 nurses, in addition to the 1,500 nurses that hospitals are working to hire today. Maine’s nursing workforce shortage is well documented. A report released in 2021 projects that Maine has a current shortage of 2,250 RNs and this shortage will remain constant through 2025. The Maine Hospital Association estimates that the bill will cost Maine hospitals \$105 million dollars to hire additional nurses to meet the staffing ratio standard.

We do not see how hospitals can possibly hire this many new nurses. LD 1639 will make permanent the care delays and long emergency department waits we are currently experiencing. It will severely impact the health care options available to residents, have an adverse effect on hospital quality and harm all businesses’ ability to

attract and retain talented staff to Maine. California passed a nurse staffing ratio law 20 years ago; no other state has passed this harmful legislation. National reports on health care quality data consistently rank California as a state with the lowest quality scores in the country. Maine consistently ranks among the states with the best quality scores.

Business, nursing and health care organizations across the state, including the Maine Hospital Association, Organization of Maine Nursing Leadership, American Nurses Association of Maine, Maine Medical Association, Maine Osteopathic Association, Maine Ambulance Association, Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine, National Federation of Independent Business, Emergency Nurses Association, the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Emergency Room Physicians, several regional chambers of commerce and the Maine State Chamber are opposed to the bill. If this bill becomes law, it will permanently damage a statewide health care system that has provided best in class care for decades.

One of the most important considerations that we hear from prospective employees are quality of life and access to quality health care. We urge you to protect the state's health care system and its patients from the consequences of this rigid, costly mandate.

Please oppose LD 1639.

Maine Medical Association

NFIB - Maine

Maine Ambulance Association

Maine State Chamber of Commerce

Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine

Maine Osteopathic Association

American Nurses Association (Maine)

Organization of Maine Nursing Leadership

Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services

Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce

Bath-Brunswick Maine Chamber of Commerce

Maine Emergency Nurses Association

Maine College of Emergency Physicians

Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

Greater Bridgton Chamber of Commerce