

**Remarks of Lucy Dawson, RN on LD 1639
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
May 4, 2023**

Hello. My name is Lucy Dawson.

I have been a nurse for 21 years and currently I am a nurse in the emergency department at Maine Medical Center.

I am here in support of The Maine Quality Care Act.

I have seen the increase in stress and moral injury that occurs when nurses are stretched too thin. Many of my coworkers are leaving the bedside, because they are unable to give the care that patients need and deserve. We cannot be the nurses that we want to be when our ratios are too high. In the critical care area, we have been increasingly forced to take on extra patients where we are placing 2 pts in a room designed for one. We are then forced to decide which pt gets the cardiac monitor and which doesn't. Determining which pt is the sickest. At that point we are just trying to keep them alive. The stress that this puts on the nurse is overwhelming. Imagine going home at the end of the day knowing that you had to make that choice. To have this happen over and over again it is no wonder why nurses are leaving the bedside. I do not want this to be the new normal at Maine Medical Center and without this bill there is no guarantee that it won't. With appropriate ratios we can spend the time giving the care we should be giving.

In other parts of the emergency department it is not uncommon for each night shift nurse to flex up to an additional patient per assignment. With the professional judgement talked about in this bill it allows the nurses to make the decision to take another pt if they are able to. Nurses are no strangers to autonomy in provisions of care and we will continue to ensure the needs of the department.

Passing this bill is the only way we can make our working conditions and the conditions for patients safe and therapeutic. Please support this bill and vote "ought to pass" on LD 1639, the Maine Quality Care Act."

Thank you for listening