



May 4, 2023

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

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Shannon Jagger, and I am here today representing Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center and Northern Light Health speaking in opposition to this bill.

I am a registered nurse and Certified Professional in Patient Safety with 8 years of experience. I work as the Nurse Manager of Nursing Excellence collaborating with nurses across the organization to implement, promote, and sustain a positive practice environment based on evidence-based standards.

Nurses thrive in environments where they are empowered, respected, and included in decision-making. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses demonstrated extraordinary clinical judgement and decision-making capacity when our community needed it most. This piece of legislation would strip nurses of their ability to exercise professional judgement and limit their autonomy to make timely decisions and take prompt action in response to the unique needs and circumstances of the patients they serve.

For example:

- 1.) A 28-week infant is delivered unexpectedly in an emergency department in a rural Maine hospital where they do not deliver babies. While the EMMC neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) transport crew are out on a call retrieving a set of premature twins, the NICU nurses, with consideration for acuity and staff competency, collaboratively adjust the patient assignment in the NICU (outside of the state mandated minimums proposed in this bill) to send a flight trained RN to this rural hospital and provide this baby timely, specialized nursing care. The baby is transported back to NL EMMC for the appropriate level of care, close to home. If this bill were to pass this very real example of professional decision-making would not be allowed to occur and this infant, and many others, would see delays in care that can result in death.

I also come to you today as a citizen of Maine with 2 (soon to be 3) young children and aging parents. In 2018 my mother was flown via air ambulance to NL EMMC intensive care unit, intubated and sedated, with life threatening illness at the age of 56. By the grace of God and

the skilled professional nurses that were able to make quick, autonomous decisions regarding how her care would be delivered, her life was spared. As the loved one of a patient, and a patient myself, I have the utmost respect and trust in nurses to exercise clinical decision-making free of red tape and state mandated limitations. I have grave concerns about the impact this bill will have on timely access to care for myself and my family.

Autonomy regarding patient care assignments is a critical aspect of nursing practice and allows care to be prioritized based on the urgency of the situation, rather than waiting for approval from higher authorities, which can and will result in delays in care. I believe that the citizens of Maine respect nurses and rely on our judgement to make both the routine and the life-and-death, in the moment, decisions that are required of a registered professional nurse. This bill is a flawed piece of legislation that imposes unnecessary and burdensome requirements on hospitals and removes decision-making capacity and autonomy from the most trusted profession in America.

I urge you to reject this bill and focus on promoting policies that support a positive and safe practice environment and advocate for both healthcare workers and the patients they serve – which is ultimately you and me.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon E. Jagger, RN". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon E. Jagger, MSN, RN-BC, NE-BC, CPPS