

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a nurse in a hospital. Over the last few months, my place of work has not had a resource nurse. The workers on my floor have had to send staff to other floors due to a shortage of nurses and techs. I am tired of working short, and I think it's important that workers have a say in staffing plans to address this issue. I urge you to issue a favorable report on HB1194/SB1020: Safe Staffing Act of 2024.

When we are working short staffed, patients do not receive high quality care because we are just trying to keep up with passing medications and rechecking patient assessments. I was in the middle of passing a medication when I heard a RAT call and ran to help. As we were wrapping the RAT up, I turned to the nursing supervisor and told him, "Don't you dare think of filling my empty bed any time soon, because I have not had a chance to chart one note"! This was at about 2 pm, and I had not had the chance to chart a single note. He told me that he understood, and that it was not him pushing to immediately fill beds, it was upper administration. He said upper administration was trying to get bedded (held over) patients out of the emergency department faster. That's why as soon as a bed opened up, management would try to move the patient.

The nursing supervisor said he understood that floor nurses are getting burned out and that he attempted to explain this to the administration. He then told me that upper administration went so far as to put medical and surgical patients into the ICU just to get them out of the ED. He tried to tell administration that this was a bad way to fill the ICU beds, because if there were an emergency, on the floor how would they get the patient into the ICU? This nursing supervisor also shared his concern that he would be fired because he disagreed with management and because he was letting the floor nurses know what was going on. Whistleblowers should NOT be fired but protected to standing up and doing the right thing.

My concerns in both areas all fall back to the concern for patient safety. I do not understand why upper administration are not more concerned about patient safety. I understand they want to bring in money for the hospital, but if we don't keep patients safe, the possibility of a lawsuit is real. This is why it's necessary for workers to have a say in staffing plans. Once again, I urge a favorable report on this legislation and thank you for your time.

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