



SB411/HB624
Safe Staffing Act of 2026
Position: **FAV**

To Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lucy Caulker-Nelson. I am a Wound Care Technician and have worked at a hospital for 25 years. The number one consequence of short staffing is delayed patient care. In wound care, any delay leads to an increased risk of infection and sepsis, which can be life threatening. Because of short staffing in my hospital, there has been an increase in workplace injuries and adverse mental health outcomes for healthcare workers. Therefore, I urge a **favorable** report The Safe Staffing Act of 2026.

Short staffing is a crisis at the hospital where I work. There are only two wound care technicians for the hospital, and every other department is short-staffed too. Patient Care Technicians are working 1:16, Medical-Surgical Nurses are working 1:6, and Intensive Care Unit Nurses are working 1:3. It's difficult to monitor and properly care for patients in a critical care environment with so few workers. We are overwhelmed, and patients must wait for basic but necessary things like a glass of water. With short staffing, it's much harder to monitor and take preventative actions before a patient becomes "code blue," meaning the patient is experiencing a life-threatening emergency.

If one department is short, it creates a domino effect that impacts everyone else. For example, when the kitchen is short, meals don't go out on time, so direct care workers need to delay giving patients their medications that are required to be taken with food. Workers are asked to take on the work of other titles in addition to our own work to cover the gaps. The workforce at my hospital is like a revolving door. There are plenty of new workers that come in, but most of them quit before their probation period is over, and many quit within a few days. Young workers see how burned and overburdened the current staff is and get frustrated because hospital management is not receptive to workers' ideas for how to fix this problem, so they quit. To fill the gaps in the healthcare workforce, workers' voices need to be heard!

If your loved one ended up in the hospital, you'd want to know that there were enough workers to care for them. Patients deserve much better and healthcare workers deserve to be treated as human beings. The Safe Staffing Act recognizes that healthcare is a team effort. It seeks to address staffing on a hospital-wide level and includes workers from the whole care team. That is what we need to achieve for workforce retention, improve working conditions, and maintain high quality care. Please vote YES on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity,

Lucy Caulker-Nelson