



November 9th, 2023

Dear lawmaker:

On behalf of the million Michigan residents who are current or retired union members, I'm writing to urge active support for the package of bills known as the Safe Patient Care Act. This package would:

- Set safe limits on the number of patients a hospital RN can be assigned (HB 4550)
- End the rampant use of forced RN overtime (HB 4551)
- Require hospitals to disclose their actual RN-to-patient ratios (HB 4552)

It is no surprise that hospital CEOs and nurse executives are doing a full-court press to stop this legislation. They have escaped accountability and regulation for years to the detriment of workers and, most of all, the patients who deserve and need the attention of a skilled RN to heal and, sometimes, to survive their hospital stay. Any one of us could need that care at any time.

This is, in fact, a matter of life or death. Forty-two percent of Michigan nurses polled report knowing of a patient dying due to a nurse being assigned too many patients. This is nearly twice the number reported in 2016.

You may ask why organized labor is so passionate about this issue. To be frank, it is a classic case of corporations exploiting workers —predominantly women. For too long, hospital executives have been allowed to force RNs to take unsafe numbers of patients or work unlimited hours – sometimes 16 or 20 hours in a row. They've been allowed, like too many corporations, to escape public transparency.

Nurse understaffing in hospitals is caused by corporations wanting to maximize their bottom line – not a shortage of nurses. Many nurses report that if a nurse-to-patient ratio law were passed, they would stay at the bedside *or return*.

We ask that you listen to bedside nurses advocating for better patient care and workplace conditions—not scare tactics from hospital CEOs and nurse executives intending to evade accountability. The Safe Patient Care Act deserves your active support.

Please also note that the interstate nurse licensure compact (HB 4935) is not a solution to the nurse staffing crisis.

While there are many problems with this legislation – including compromising Michigan's ability to regulate the nursing profession – the compact is anti-worker because it allows employers to immediately import strikebreakers. This dilutes the power of workers to use collective action to improve their working conditions, including the ability of healthcare professionals to advocate for safer patient care.

Thank you for your time and support of our workers, and please don't hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Bieber".

Ron Bieber, President
Michigan AFL-CIO