

**Carolyn Clemons, RN**  
**Remarks in support of HB 4550, 4551, 4552**  
**Nov. 9, 2023**

Hello, Chair Rogers and committee members.

First, let me give an honor to God, who is the head of my life.

Thank you for your time today.

My name is Carolyn Clemons and I'm a registered nurse in the Grand Blanc area.

I'm also a leader in my local union, Teamsters 332, which supports all three parts of this legislation.

I'm a member of the State Board of Nursing, although I am not here in that capacity today.

I have been a registered nurse for more than two decades.

I currently work in the special care nursery – with fragile newborn babies -- and I also have over 18 and half years of experience in the medical intensive care unit.

Nursing is a tough job and we all accept that.

However, hospitals are making it tougher than ever to do our jobs.

I worked throughout the pandemic, where we lost valuable family members but nothing was more devastating than when we lost 52 people in 30 days.

That was my breaking point.

Upon arrival the next day, I sat in my car, crying and shaking and not wanting to go into work.

It wasn't the pandemic and death per se, although that definitely took its toll.

It was more the fact that I didn't feel supported by administration.

Understaffing started before the pandemic, continued through it and it continues today.

We are too often scheduled short with no plan.

I have been left as the only specially trained nurse to take care of 8 babies on the unit.

Eight fragile newborns.

These are babies that may be on ventilators, have chest tubes, have IVs – they have complex, specialized needs to keep them alive.

This is someone's child.

I think of my own grandchild – being that vulnerable, and it makes me sad and angry.

There is risk to the babies and there is unbelievable stress for me, trying to monitor and take care of all these children.

The trauma this causes me and other nurses is hard to measure, but we feel it every day.

My frustration is that administration is not planning properly for our staffing needs.

That's why we need a law that establishes safe limits on patient assignments.

So that we can actually do our jobs and keep these little babies safe and get them healthy.

So that nurses aren't sitting in their cars crying, not wanting to go into work or quit and leave nursing altogether due to making difficult decisions about who gets care and who has to wait.

Please, we need you to support us so we can support our communities.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on the Safe Patient Care Act.