

February 20th, 2019

To: The House Housing and Human Services Committee

From: Kelly Smith-Haley

Re: Support of HB 2346, HB 2348, and HB 2024

Dear Chair Keny Guyer,

My name is Kelly Smith-Haley and I live in Milwaukee.

I am a mom to a 9-month old and a 4-year-old and work as a nurse. I have done a lot of job changing within that role because of becoming a parent. With my first pregnancy, I worked full-time night shift but decreased to two night shifts a week once I had the baby because of the expense of childcare and challenges of breastfeeding and caring for a baby. In preparation for my second pregnancy, I took a pay cut to have day time work at a doctors office but then had to put my older child in daycare full time. I worked that shift through my second pregnancy with some very part-time shifts on-call at the hospital still to keep my skills up and my foot in the door. But after my second baby was born, it was apparent that paying for child care for two kids was not going to be financially advantageous. So now I have switched yet again and left the doctors office job to work exclusively on-call at the hospital. This puts me at home mostly full time with the kids with a few shifts a month as a nurse, but have lost seniority in my position and am the first to get cut from my shift if they need fewer nurses. Being on-call also still requires me to pay for child care whether or not I get called into a shift, so I am often in the position of spending money even if I don't make any money.

Our childcare arrangements have varied from neighbors, in-home daycare, and preschool. The plan is regularly revised due to childcare availability and/or cost. My largest child care bill was actually the first two months of having my second child to allow for medical appointments, delivery, and then bonding with a newborn without having a preschooler bouncing off the walls.

Being a mom of young children has also interrupted my career track. I lose chances for career development, new positions within my work, or trainings that would lead me to making more money in the future. Despite there being a nursing shortage, I am limited from working due to childcare barriers. Any paid meetings or trainings I do attend cost an extra 2 hours of childcare for travel time to and from.

Being a mom and spending time with my family is undoubtedly my favorite and most important role. However, it has also meant an interruption to my career, which I worked hard for and took out loans to achieve; a decrease in my family's income; and a constant point of stress to arrange. We can do better for our children and families.

Sincerely,

Kelly Smith-Haley, RN