

Submitter: Patrick Hennessy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Good evening, Chair Nosse, vice-chairs, and committee members. My name is Patrick Hennessy and I am proud to say that I have been a trauma nurse for over nine years. I currently work at OHSU on the Trauma Surgical ICU. I am here today to express my deep-felt support for House Bill 2697. As we have heard before and I will say it again, Safe Staffing Saves Lives. It is crucial that every hospital unit needs to have an appropriate ratio of nurses to patients.

As I introduced myself I said that I was proud to be a nurse for over nine years.

Lately... its getting harder and harder to say that.

When I started nursing, when we were short staffed it was expected that WE as nurses would just "make it work". We did it and we were proud of ourselves for doing the impossible.

The pandemic changed all of that and changed nursing for ever and in some ways its worse now. Patients coming into the hospital are sicker and need more care. Good, experienced nurses are leaving the profession every day because they are burned out. I often go into work where I have to take care of two critically ill patients with no support but I am expected to just "make it work". There are shifts where I can't even go eat lunch because there is no one to cover me.

Some days I feel like this job is killing me...Not just because I am exhausted all of the time, but on a moral level where no matter how hard I try I can't do my best work.

That pride I used to have as a trauma nurse, going in and saving lives...that pride is fading away.

But I do have hope that change is coming with your support of HB 2697. It will be a huge step towards better staffing so that we can honestly take care of our patients while maintaining our own well-being.

I will say that on days like today, where nurses are coming together to advocate for ourselves and our patients...today...I can say I am proud to be a nurse. Thank you.