

Submitter: Jessica Swopes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2665

March 16, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 2665. Working as a CNA for about seven years now, I have moderate experience in the healthcare field.

I have been employed through a staffing agency and have also worked for a single long term care facility. I can testify that this bill will negatively impact myself and many others.

Some individuals who are in support of this bill also manage long term care facilities, or acute rehab facilities. If you ask a resident about their stay at many of these facilities, they will often tell you their biggest complaint is not receiving timely care. This is from staffing shortages. Shortages that agencies like mine work hard to fill.

It is beneficial for these facilities to pay low wages to the hard workers they employ, maximizing profits for the primary stakeholders in the company. This creates resentment among employees, for their hard work is not reflected in their pay. Not only that, but staffing is sometimes neglectful of the needs of the employee, and this causes potential for call-outs and cancellations. Staffing agencies provide immediate relief in these instances, the agency staff member arriving to help and provide the care needed, sometimes on very short notice.

The pay rates for agency staff members are an actual living wage, in my experience. I have two toddlers and I cannot work steady hours. The amount of time I can actually pick up shifts varies week by week. Being employed through a staffing agency enables me to work when I can, and enables me to still care for my family.

The work an agency staff member does is different than onsite staff. We go into a building and have to learn immediate important information about all of our designated residents – such as their transfer status, diet or eating restrictions, level of continence. We have to learn quickly the location of essential items for care, time-frames for daily activities, and the activities that are promised to the resident on that day (i.e. shower).

Facilities turn to staffing agencies when they need help. If this bill passes it will limit the pay for people who are willing to perform in these dire situations and might create an even greater strain on the healthcare system because people will leave the

profession entirely. On a side note – I also feel that the push for fair pay is coming from the wrong end. There needs to be higher pay for the employees who work for the facilities themselves. This will ensure they keep necessary staff and everyone will be better off. Keep the agency rates the same and also boost the pay for the facility employees. There also needs to be a standardized system that can accurately and quickly provide a resident's complete information to everyone who will be assisting them. These points are off topic, however.

I hope the opposition for HB 2665 will prevail and this bill will not pass. I thank you for your time and for letting me voice my opinion.

Regards,
Jessica Swopes