

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been an RN for 14 years. I've worked in the hospital setting, clinic setting, home health setting and now, as an agency nurse, in the long term care setting. I'm very concerned about HB 2524. I fear that the consequences of this bill will gravely hurt the long term care industry and therefore the elderly in their care. While the Covid-19 pandemic has completely changed the way staffing is done in multiple settings there is still a huge need for agency staff. There continues to be a nationwide nursing shortage. Nursing is a career field that is shrinking. There is also, a large number, of baby boomers who are now retiring. All these factors combined make a perfect storm of nursing shortages all over the nation. While hospitals and other settings are feeling this shortage as well, no other setting is hurting as much as the long term care setting. Long term care facilities were short staffed prior to the pandemic, though. This has been going on for decades. It's not a new concept for long term care facilities to use agency staff. New nurses, especially, do not want to work in the long term care setting. I hear this all the time from nursing students. They want to work in the hospital setting to use the skills they've learned and master them. I completely understand and I did this myself. I worked in the acute hospital setting for 7 out of my 14 years as a nurse.

I'm sure that there are some staffing agencies that take advantage of this shortage and use it to make themselves a nice profit. However, I don't believe that all agencies operate this way. I fear that if the agency nurses are removed from the long term care setting the elderly will be the ones to take the brunt of the blow. They will not get the care that they need because of continued staffing shortages. This doesn't just apply to professional nurses, but certified nursing aides as well as certified medication aides. These people will go and work, pretty much, anywhere else because they can make more money without breaking their backs, wiping butts, lifting residents that can't help themselves, and feeding people that can't feed themselves. Long term care is not a cushy job and never has been. It's hard work for not much in compensation. Long term care executives know this, managers know this, the resident's families know this and the residents, themselves, know this.

In short, please consider the elderly patients who need the long term care facilities to be fully staffed with professional nurses as well as certified nursing aides and medication aides who are dedicated to their craft. Please do not pass HB 2524. The elderly and vulnerable populations deserve better.

Sincerely,

An overworked registered nurse

*Ashley Brewer*