

March 5, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and House Finance Committee Members,

As a DNS I am writing to you with my concern for the pending decision regarding Minimum Staffing Mandate. Since the covid pandemic, healthcare has changed dramatically, and not for the better. It has become extremely hard to adequately staff Skilled Nursing Facilities as Staffing Agencies have ruined the ability to get quality in-house staff at a fair hourly rate. This has often left nursing management to pick up open shifts and staff to incur copious amounts of overtime. In addition, the new regulations recently put in place with family members and/or residents to install security cameras in their rooms, employees have expressed concerns about their privacy not wanting to be videotaped while providing care to their residents and explicitly expressed that they will leave.

This has become a safety issue with high burnout rates and overworked staff. If the staffing requirement was to be enforced, we would need far more staff than we currently have, and the fines alone would break Skilled Nursing Facilities owners. As it stands, with all recruitment efforts and the increase in compensation, facilities are still faced with the lack of applicants interested in working with or joining our nursing facilities.

How are facilities supposed to keep their doors open and pay their staff while being penalized? This is not feasible, and the residents will suffer immensely. We are asking for you to evaluate this decision carefully with an understanding of the impact it will have on our elderly population. Hospitals will become overrun with patients needing placement, this is not sustainable to our healthcare system

Respectfully,

Nikki Larocque RN, BSN, DNS