

March 5, 2025
Dennis Hazard, CNA
Pawtucket

Subject: Opposition to Budget Article 8 (Section 4) and Article 10 (Section 2)

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Dennis Hazard, I live in Pawtucket. I have been a CNA for almost 45 years. My testimony today is in opposition to Budget Article 8 (Section 4) and Article 10 (Section 2).

I started as a CNA in 1981. I have been working in the same unit in the same building that whole time. Back then, we had 7 or 8 CNAs working on our floor. We also had a bed maker, 2 nurses and 1 med tech. That's 11 or 12 people on our floor. That was for our 38 patients.

Each CNA would have an assignment of around 4 or 5 people. If one of the CNAs called out sick, the management would come up to the floor to take an assignment and help to make sure the patients got the care they needed. When you only have 4 or 5 patients, you can comb their hair, do their make up. We would take them outside and sit with them at the picnic table so they could enjoy the outdoors. Every day we would give each patient a whirlpool and a shower. The patients got to live regular lives with dignity.

Back then, there were state regulations about staffing. Then the state stopped regulating staffing in nursing homes. And whatever company owned the nursing home would put however many they wanted on the floor. Now, on a really good day, each CNA has 8 patients to care for, double the amount from past standards. Oftentimes we are short staffed, so we get assigned 10 or even 12 patients. Triple the amount from what I was used to.

Patients aren't getting the care they are used to getting. We have to rush rush rush, to the next patient. If someone puts on their call light because they need to use the bathroom, they'll just have to wait. Patients don't even get a shower every day. There's a schedule, some people get a shower on a Monday, some people on Tuesday. What kind of life is that?

This is why we need to protect the Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act and oppose Budget Article 8 (Section 4) and Article 10 (Section 2). Our residents deserve to go outside in the sunshine, have a shower, have their hair and makeup done. We can do that, but we need your help. Thank you.