



March 13, 2024

Subject: Support for the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board Bill (H-7733)

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Rosalie Federici, and I am writing to you not just as a former Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) with 28 years of experience but as someone who has witnessed firsthand the steady decline in the quality of care and working conditions in Rhode Island's nursing homes. I have recently made the difficult decision to leave the profession I once loved deeply due to the unbearable circumstances brought about by corporate mismanagement and chronic understaffing.

Over the years, the resident population in nursing homes has drastically changed, requiring more intensive supports and specialized care. However, the training and resources provided to us have not evolved to meet these new demands, leaving us unprepared to properly care for our residents. As someone who chose this profession out of love and a genuine desire to provide the best care possible, it has been heartbreaking to see how our ability to do so has been compromised.

The situation has only worsened since our facility was taken over by a corporation. Staffing levels have dropped to dangerously low numbers, with ratios sometimes as overwhelming as three aides to 49 residents. The consequence of such staffing levels is that residents, some of whom pay over \$10,000 a month for their care, receive mere minutes of our time each day. We are constantly rushed, unable to spend the meaningful time they deserve for basic needs, let alone for companionship or emotional support.

The lack of adequate staffing also means that many of us have been unable to take our earned vacations. This relentless workload without adequate breaks has led to significant burnout, both physically and emotionally, among my colleagues and me.

Moreover, the corporate owners, despite making significant profits, have cut corners in every possible way - from reducing holiday pay to failing to maintain essential facilities like

housekeeping and food services, impacting both staff and residents' daily lives. It's a system that values profits over people, and it's the residents and dedicated caregivers who suffer the most.

This is why I strongly support the Raise the Bar on Resident Care Priority Bill, the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board. This bill promises a systemic overhaul that would address these issues head-on, ensuring that nursing homes are staffed appropriately, caregivers are trained to meet the evolving needs of residents, and that there is accountability for nursing home operators who fail to meet these standards. It represents a hope for a future where both residents and caregivers are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Leaving the profession was not an easy choice for me, but continuing under such conditions was no longer viable. I've seen too many of my colleagues leave for the same reasons, and more will follow if we do not see meaningful change. This bill could be the catalyst for that change, ensuring quality care for our elderly and respect for the caregivers who serve them.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I implore you to support the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board Bill. It is time to take decisive action to reform our nursing home system and protect our most vulnerable and the dedicated workforce that cares for them.

Sincerely,

Rosalie Federici, CNA