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TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB 2134 HD#1 RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR NURSING

To: Chair Josh Green and Vice Chair John Mizuno
House Committee on Health
From: Claudine M. Tomasa, RN
Date: February 8, 2008
Re: House Bill No 2134 HD#1 Relating to the Center For Nursing

Good morning Chair Green, Vice Chair Mizuno and members of the Committee on Health. My name is Claudine Tomasa. I am a Registered Nurse and I am testifying against HB 2134 HD#1 which allows the Center for Nursing to be funded another five years- by imposing a \$40.00 surcharge/tax upon nurses whenever we renew our nursing license.

As mentioned earlier in another committee hearing:

1. I do not believe that the Center for Nursing has complied with Act 198 (which created the Center) in terms of ensuring that better data about nurses is available to improve health care in Hawaii as well as improving working conditions for nurses. Nor do I believe that the Center has conducted research on best practices and quality outcomes for nurses practicing in acute care facilities.
2. There is a great need to retain qualified, seasoned nurses at the bedside to care for Hawaii's seriously ill patients in the Acute Care Setting. Unfortunately seasoned nurses continue to leave bedside nursing or cut their hours of work, because of the working conditions and its impact upon their ability to practice safe, quality, nursing care - adding to the nursing shortage.
3. I am unclear as to what the Center For Nursing is doing to help stop these nurses from leaving the bedside in the acute care facilities. Perhaps an audit should be conducted to determine whether the mandatory surcharge is being utilized appropriately to meet the intent of Act 198- address the nursing shortage and retention of qualified seasoned nurses.

It is for the above reasons that I urge you to hold HB2134HD#1 in Committee. Do not compel hard working professional nurses to continuously fund a Center that I believe has not been accountable.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition of HB 2134 HD#1.



To: Chair Josh Green, Vice Chair John Mizuno, and Members of the Committee on Health

From: Hector R. Ramos, Interim Executive Director of Hawaii Nurses Association

Date: February 8, 2008

Good Morning Chair Green, Vice Chair Mizuno, and members of the Committee on Health.

I speak in opposition to 2134 which would extend the tax on nurses in Hawaii contrary to the compact made with them when the Center for Nursing was originally established. This tax is an unprecedented tax on a vital profession and it penalizes nurses for a problem faced by the community as though it was they that caused it. We constantly hear of a shortage of doctors and engineers yet they are not forced to pay such a tax as the nurses are.

Regarding the surveys being conducted by the Center for Nursing to help understand the community problem of a shortage of nurses at the bedside, the surveys do not address the working conditions that drive nurses out of bed-side care. A systematic analysis of working conditions and a plan of action to improve those working conditions is the solution to stop the exodus of registered nurses from the bed-side. Two examples best illustrate this back injuries and rotation. Rotation is when a nurse is required to work a different shift rather than her regular one. This occurs quite often and I ask you, how many years are nurses, with family responsibilities and other community interests, supposed to endure such disruptions in their personal lives before they seek employment elsewhere? Back-injuries, the rate of back-injuries among healthcare workers is the highest or second-highest among all professions in the country. Why are nurses not expected to seek employment elsewhere when they have suffered such injuries or witnessed colleague after colleague suffer through such injury. Especially knowing that such injuries are preventable and employers have failed in introducing the needed equipment. Has the Center of Nursing considered these issues in their discussions to address the problem? As a legislator responsible for public policy, has the Center even raised the possibility that working conditions may be a cause of the working shortage? Let us examine a clear cause and effect example: at HMC-East & West 32 RN's since September 2007 have left their employment when the new management implemented adverse changes in their working conditions. This number is expected to rise.

Education of nurses seems to be a focus of the Center of Nursing. However their focus will reduce bedside care nurses since facilitating masters and doctorate degrees for nurses removes them from the bedside. Where is their proposal to bring back affordable 2 year associate degree programs that have proven successful in the past? Where is their proposal to expand on hospital intern programs that raises the working knowledge of new graduates?

It is HNA's contentions that the Center for Nursing has not met its responsibility to the nurses that fund it or to the legislature by not addressing that real issues of the bed-side nursing shortage. Thus this unprecedented tax on nurses should cease and the promise that it would cease after 5 years should be kept by the government.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. R. R.", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

LATE
Testimony**May Mizuno**

From: Joan Craft [joancraft@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 9:29 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: Testimony committee on Health for 02-08-08
Attachments: CNFtestimony.doc

To: Dr. Josh Green Chairman, John Mizuno Vice-Chairman and Members of the Committee on Health

From: Joan Craft, RN
Vice-President Hawaii Nurses Association -Representing 4000 RNs
Vice-President United American Nurses, AFL-CIO Representing 100,000 RNs
Board Member Hawaii Center for Nursing

Date: February 8, 2008

Good Morning Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Mizuno, and members of the Committee on Health.

My name is Joan Craft. I am a Registered Nurse and I am testifying against HB 2134 HD#1 which allows the Center for Nursing to be funded -for another five years- by imposing a \$40.00 surcharge/tax upon nurses whenever we renew our nursing license.

I disagree with the center on this issue. When I was appointed to the Center for nursing two years ago, I and Vicky Poland the only other staff nurse on the CFN, raised the issue of funding. We suggested that the employers should pay a fair share. The response we got was, that the employers would not agree to it. The other issue I have is, when this legislation was enacted it was with this sunset clause intact. For the CFN to now attempt to remove it is dishonest.

I randomly polled other state's Centers for nursing regarding how they are funded. The responses I got included: earmark funding, start up funding, infrastructure funding by the government and hospital corporations and other grants. They did not say that the Nurses funded it.

The Center for nursing will not be motivated to find alternate funding if the sunset clause is extended.

The CFN claims to be a balanced voice for the nursing profession. The majority of working nurses in Hawaii are staff nurses. Of the fourteen CFN board members, two are staff nurses. The majority of the rest are Health care administrators, former health care administrators, educators , one social worker/business agent, one APRN-PhD.

It is for the above reasons that I urge you to veto this bill.
Thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to HB2134HD#1.

Thank you for your support. The Nurses Thank You.

Joan Craft, RN
Vice-President
Hawaii Nurses' Association
Collective Bargaining Committee Chair
(808) 864-0079 c.

Visit www.hawaiinurses.org or www.UANNurse.org for the latest news and information on the issues important to staff nurses.