

# THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



HHS\_03-24-23 1:00PM SCR112, 180\_SR 118,175

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

CONCERNING: SCR 112 / SR 118 ADOPTING THE NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT.  
SCR 180 / SR 175 FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF  
NURSES

POSITION: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the Committee

The Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i has a membership of more than 2,000 politically active and aware seniors and we support all programs which will help Hawaii expand the number of trained medical personnel who can assist people in need of medical service, but who cannot get to an MD or Hospital.

You all know we have lost over 700 doctors and over 5000 nurses left the profession or left the islands and that was just as of 2021. The State needs to do everything it can to expand the nurse education facilities in the state as hundreds of qualified applicants are turned away annually due to lack of teachers.

Programs to retain nurses still in the field and to recruit nursing talent are also necessary which will require adjustments to exhausting over time schedules and more pay or dedicated housing. The Nurses licensure program will certify nurse professionals in all the states signed up with the program. Being part of this program will allow Hawaii to recruit and accept nurses from other states who might be willing to work here, even if temporarily.

Hawaii needs time to improve and expand nursing education opportunities so that local and qualified applicants can get the education they want and live and work her in Hawaii.

Please vote for these resolutions

Martha E Randolph for the Kūpuna Caucus of the  
Democratic Party of Hawaii



**Written Testimony Presented Before the Senate  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
Friday, March 24, 2023 at 1:02 PM  
by  
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC  
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**Comments on S.C.R. 180/ S.R. 175**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.C.R. 180/ S.R. 175.

This resolution finds that there is a continuing nursing workforce shortage and identifies that improving nurse and health care worker safety and working conditions leads to better patient care and staffing standards. This resolution requests that the Department of Health convene a working group to establish recommendations related to minimum staff-to-patient ratios, development of staffing committees, and break and overtime provisions.

In 2022, the American Association of Critical Care nurses, American Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse Leaders, Healthcare Financial Management Association, and Institute for Healthcare Improvement developed the Nurse Staffing Think Tank: Priority Topics and Recommendations<sup>1</sup>. The work launched an initiative by providing:

1. Strategic advice on broad ideas and direction based on data that identifies the root causes of the nursing shortage
2. Input on workforce trends, challenges and issues hindering progress toward feasible and practical staffing solutions
3. Strategic direction for broader goals
4. Options for action, including associated outcomes (Purpose Statement, Page 2)

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing (HSCN) cites this national effort because while the recommendations address creating safe staffing environments, the recommended action is that specialty nursing organizations should “investigate evidence related to scope of practice and minimum safe staffing levels for patients in their specialty” (Healthy Work Environment, Page 7). It appears that there may not yet be updated evidence-based guidelines related to safe staffing standards. COVID-19 and the well documented increase in patient volume and level of patient illness in Hawai'i, and the nation, has shifted the applicability of past evidence to the current environment.

While we wait for national guidance on updated and revised standards, we are not idle. We have launched our own initiative related to “Wellness as a Factor of Recruitment and Retention”. In this workgroup, which includes healthcare employers, nurse faculty, labor, and HSCN staff and advisory board representation, we [described the key challenges](#) relevant to wellness, recruitment, and retention in our own state. We found our challenges closely align with the Nurse Staffing Think Tank, and launched the effort to review the recommendations from the think tank, with the intention to prioritize action and adoption for our state.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nursingworld.org/~49940b/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/nurse-staffing/nurse-staffing-think-tank-recommendation.pdf>

*The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development, promotes a diverse workforce, and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.*

This work, focusing on the wellbeing of nurses as a means to ensure their safety and investing in their stability as a workforce, is necessary. So too is the ability to project workforce needs based on staffing levels, as this is a requisite for success. While we have workforce supply, education capacity, and current demand data, we do not have future workforce projection models. Workforce projections that account for large staffing shifts would be necessary to ensure that our local school of nursing graduation rates are meeting the future demands for nursing. Last year, the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing received estimates that developing a projection model for future workforce demand would cost approximately \$100,000. In addition, any increase in workforce demand needs to be matched with nursing school expansion, such as the proposed expansion of UH nursing education through the UH Health Workforce Initiative, included in the state budget.

Any initiative of this type needs complimentary efforts including future workforce projections as well as plans to address any nursing workforce shortfalls through educational expansion.

Thank you for the consideration of this testimony as it relates to S.C.R. 180 / S.R. 175.

*The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development, promotes a diverse workforce, and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.*

Friday, March 24, 2023 at 1:02 pm  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **Comments on SCR 180/SR 175  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING  
GROUP TO PREPARE AND DEVELOP SOLUTIONS AND MAKE  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF  
NURSES TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF THE NURSING AND HEALTH  
CARE WORKFORCE IN THE STATE.**

---

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs for Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

**I write to provide comments on SCR 180/SR 175** which requests the Department of Health (DOH) to convene a working group to assess the nursing and health care workforce shortage in the state. In the context of the assessment, the working group is tasked with considering staffing ratios for hospitals, care homes and dialysis facilities; requiring hospitals to create staffing committees and staffing plans; and establishing meal breaks and rest breaks as strategies and the potential effects on recruitment or retaining nurses.

HPH appreciates the intent of SCR 180/HR175, however, we note that addressing the nursing shortage is not dependent on creating staffing ratios and establishing meal and rest breaks. We have guidelines in place for deciding how many patients a nurse can care for at a time. Despite these guidelines, HPH continues to deal with a shortage of nurses, and has had to rely on hiring additional nurses from out of state to fill staffing gaps.

In the current healthcare environment, when novel and nimble staffing solutions are needed to care for our community, having mandated ratios, regardless of actual staffing

needs of a particular unit or facility will lead to overstaffing in some circumstances and understaffing in others.

Staffing ratios, meal breaks, rest breaks, overtime (OT) and other matters are largely dependent on collective bargaining agreements. A one-size-fits-all approach would do more harm than good as it removes the needed flexibility to operate, which will negatively impact care. The unintended consequences of mandating staffing ratios and break times will be the increase in costs for our already strapped community and dire fiscal circumstances for health care organizations and providers already struggling post-pandemic. These kinds of initiatives do little to address the root of the nursing shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SR-175**

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 12:10:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/24/2023 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne Scharnhorst	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is central to the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Hawaii. Though there is cost associated with understanding the workforce needs for healthcare workers, and costs providing and supporting these workers, without them the very fabric of aloha is threatened.

Mahalo for your work and support of this important efforts.