

## DISCLAIMER

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Chairman Townsend, (vice-Chairman Warren Hardy) members of the Senate Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you my concerns on SB 93.

My name is Jerri Strasser.

I am a bedside pediatric nurse and a member of SEIU, the union representing 4000 Southern Nevada nurses.

I have been a healthcare professional in this community for more than 21 years.

I, along with the nurses with me today, oppose SB 93. We do not believe it will solve any of the problems we are currently facing. Understaffing and mandatory overtime are driving nurses away from the bedside and in many cases, our profession. Until we improve the working conditions for our Nurses, Nevada's patients will not be advocated for in the manner in which they deserve.

This being said, here are our specific concerns with SB93.

This bill is unnecessary. The Nevada Legislature and the Nevada State Board of Nursing have already done the work necessary to reduce barriers to nurse licensure.

I have spoken with my nurse colleagues, and the common experience with nurses in Nevada is that the licensure process is smooth and timely. Most nurses are licensed within 10 days of arriving in Las Vegas, and in some cases nurses have been licensed within 24 hours. It should be further noted that the bill passed last session to increase the number of dentists practicing in Nevada is comparable to what already exists for nurses today.

SB 93 will not help our nursing shortage. In fact, it would disenfranchise Nevada nurses and drive them away from our profession. SB 93 would actually erode the conditions we have worked so hard to establish to keep our nurses here.

SB 93 would allow nurses to be permanent residents of another state and work in Nevada hospitals. They would become "permanent travelers" with no ties to the communities they serve. It would undermine the patient care standards we have worked so hard to protect and uphold while doing nothing to improve the working conditions that are driving nurses away.

Under mutual recognition, it will be difficult to identify and monitor nurses practicing in Nevada. There will be no way to determine whether out-of-state nurses are updating their skills by taking the required amount of CEUs. There is also no way to guarantee that they will even be given a copy of our Nurse Practice Act. For the sake

of our patients, all nurses must be held accountable to Nevada's standards. Lowering the bar isn't good for anyone, especially our patients.

By passing SB 93, you may be exacerbating the problem. Nevada Nurses are just as free to leave and practice in a compact state. And, the 18 states that are members of the compact, are experiencing the same shortage of nurses, which means you are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Lastly, this bill does nothing to ensure there is a supply of fresh, rested and engaged nurses ready to serve the needs of Nevada patients. Instead, it will serve to reshuffle the existing supply of nurses with a possible loss of the nurses who live and work in our state.

The true solution to the shortage of individuals willing to be Nevada nurses is to:

- 1) recruit and educate new nurses
- 2) mandate safe staffing levels which will not only keep nurses in the profession, but will reduce patient mortality and morbidity.

3) place limits on mandatory overtime so the nurses caring for our citizens will see changes in conditions and intervene in a timely manner.

Frustration and poor working conditions only serve to keep people from wanting to pursue nursing careers. As long as nurses are overloaded and unable to provide quality patient care they will continue to leave and find careers that provide greater rewards and satisfaction.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.