

**Testimony of Mary Krusiewicz RN
Before the Public Health Committee
Re: Raised Bill 5732
February 27, 2013**

Good morning Chairman Gerratana, Chairman Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Mary Krusiewicz. I work as an Apheresis Staff Nurse at the American Red Cross in Farmington, where I have been employed for 30 years.

I would like to comment on Raised Bill 5732, an Act Requiring Licensed Nurses at Blood Drives.

As a licensed registered nurse, with my education and medical background, I am better equipped to ensure our donors' safety and the safety of the blood supply than an unlicensed person. When administering Health History guidelines, I have more knowledge of cardiac and other medical conditions and am better able to evaluate the donors' answers to health history questions in order to get an accurate health history that ensures the safety of both the donor and the blood supply.

I worked on mobile blood drives for 5 years prior to moving to the Apheresis Department where we draw platelet products. We also draw whole blood, autologous, and therapeutic units as well.

The donors' well being is my responsibility and they need to feel comfortable and safe. The donors know that if they have a medical problem or a reaction a licensed professional is there to take care of them and make medical decisions. They put their trust in us to watch over them and protect them. People know that other institutions operate with licensed professionals in charge. The donors' perception and belief is that the Red Cross runs its business with licensed professionals as well. Most donors are unaware that the majority of the collections staff are unlicensed phlebotomists, and the Red Cross does nothing to change that perception.

Technicians, though trained in the procedure, look to the licensed professionals and their medical expertise to answer questions and give the necessary direction. Due to the process of the procedure, donor reactions can happen and when they do, the technicians turn to the nurses to take charge of the situation and provide medical support to the donor.

I urge you to pass this bill so that the Red Cross will be required to ensure that all blood drives go out with licensed registered nurses, thereby making the donation experience a safe one. It is my belief that the safety of our donors is paramount and should be more important to the Red Cross than its cost cutting measures.

Thank you very much.