

Testimony of Lisa D'Abrosca, RN
President, Lawrence & Memorial Nurses Union

Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

SB 968 AN ACT CONCERNING REPORTS OF NURSE STAFFING LEVELS

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Lisa D'Abrosca. I am the President of the nurses union at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London. I represent approximately 500 RNs at L&M. I am writing to you today to ask for your support of SB 968: An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels. This bill benefits both the general public and hospital employees and alike.

As we all know, healthcare is becoming more and more consumer driven. People now have a choice as to where they receive health care. As educated consumers, patients (or potential patients) have the ability to do research on different healthcare facilities. SB 968 will put information regarding a very important aspect of patient care at their fingertips: nursing care.

Patients have many expectations when they come to a hospital, and nursing care is at the top of that list. With the passage of SB 968, patients will be able to know what to expect for care at any given hospital. Extensive research demonstrates that a lower patient to nurse ratio equals a more successful patient outcome. Common sense dictates that a patient will choose a hospital that has more caregivers over a hospital with fewer caregivers.

Along with the straight numerical data, the bill forces hospitals to reveal "the method used by the hospital to determine and adjust direct patient care staffing levels." When patients review this information, they will see exactly how the hospitals calculate these numbers, and the patients can decide if that method is satisfactory to them. If the patient deems this method unsatisfactory, he or she can look elsewhere.

The hospital employees will benefit from this bill because it will result in a competitive workforce. If hospital A knows that hospital B has a better nurse to patient ratio, hospital A will be forced to increase the number of caregivers. I think the importance of having enough nurses is obvious. However, this bill does not just speak to the RNs providing direct patient care; it speaks to LPNs and nurses' aides as well. I cannot stress enough how important ancillary staff members are. Every day, I depend on having nurses' aides and LPNs to help me provide safe and excellent patient care. As I can tell you from experience, a small nurse to patient ratio is great, but not as great as making sure that I have the support staff to back me up.

I hope that this testimony has helped to provide clarity on the importance of this bill. With the passage of this bill, patients will be able to be more proactive in their medical outcomes, thereby creating a healthier community. Hospital employees will be in a better, sounder, environment. Everyone wins. I thank you all for your time, and for your support.

Sincerely,
Lisa D'Abrosca, RN