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AFT Healthcare 

Testimony of

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Public Health Committee Public Hearing
March 5, 2014

HB 5384 An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is John Brady and I am President of the Backus Federation of Nurses, a union representing Registered Nurses at Backus Hospital in Norwich. I write to urge your support for raised bill 5384, An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels.

In my 20 years of service in the emergency room of Backus Hospital, I have seen the number and acuity of patients grow and the role of the Registered Nurse become more complex. At the same time I have seen staffing levels decrease as a cost cutting measure. This concern is not limited to the emergency department but is seen hospital wide.

Concerns over how declining staffing levels negatively impact patient care, coupled with the fear of speaking out to correct it, was the primary drive behind the decision of Backus nurses to unionize three years ago. By standing together, we now have the ability to advocate for our patients without fear of retaliation.

As a member of the Department of Public Health Advisory Committee, I see how stretched state resources are when it comes to policing Connecticut's hospitals. This bill would empower our patients by giving them the ability to see staffing levels online and as such would help us ensure their safety and wellbeing.

I urge you to act favorably on HB 5385. I stand ready to assist you in any way I can.