



A Union of Professionals

AFT Healthcare 

**LAWRENCE & MEMORIAL REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSES
43 CONVERSE PLACE
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT 06320**

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Lisa D'Abrosca, and I stand in support of SB 855—An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels.

I am the president of the nurses' union at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, and I represent approximately 540 nurses. Along with that, I am a nurse full-time on a medical-surgical-oncology floor at Lawrence and Memorial and I provide direct patient care. I speak as a representative of both positions when I stress the importance of your support for this bill. There are several pertinent points that I would like to speak to at this time.

First, I am in favor of making it mandatory for hospitals to report their staffing plans annually. Currently, hospitals are not required to make this information available to the DPH unless requested. Furthermore, the requirement of the Commissioner of Public Health to report hospital compliance will additionally help to hold hospitals accountable. Together, these changes will ensure that hospitals do not shirk their responsibility in this matter.

Next, I would like to point out the importance of reporting ratios. At present, hospitals are only mandated to include the professional skill mix for each patient care department. Granted, hospitals are required to identify the level of administrative staffing, so that a true staffing mix can be identified. But, I can tell you from experience, the hospital still finds a way around it. By requiring hospitals to report staff to patient ratios, more accurate staffing information will be established.

Lastly, I refer to the requirement of the hospital to report the method used in determining and adjusting direct patient care staffing levels. In my experience, I have seen hospitals change staffing ratios in a capricious manner that does not take into account basic patient needs—let alone safe patient care. I've seen hospitals change these numbers on a whim for the express purpose of meeting budgetary goals. As we all know, staffing levels directly impact patient care—better staffing leads to better care, and poor staffing leads to poor outcomes. This bill will help to hold hospitals accountable for making sure that patients are being properly cared for by the appropriate amount of staff.

In closing, I want to thank you all for taking the time to hear my testimony here today, and I wish to thank you in advance for your support on this issue.