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United for Quality Care

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Darlene Deprey, LPN
Westside

SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Public Health Committee

In Support of SB 1030 AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES with changes.

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Darlene Deprey. I am a charge nurse working at Westside Care Center in Manchester. I have been a nurse for 12 years working in a long-term care setting. In 2019, I spoke in front of the Appropriations Committee about staffing. Two years later, I've witnessed no remarkable changes that affect direct care for the patients I serve. Senate Bill 1030 would make some of those changes needed that I have been waiting at least two years for.

I celebrate the handful of states who have, after years, changed their mandated hours per patient, per day from 1.9 hours to 4.1 hours. As a floor nurse, I have an average of 30-35 patients in an 8 hour shift. Honestly, I'm lucky if I can spend 5 or 10 minutes with each patient. We no longer care for the simply aging patient. Our patients are being sent right from the hospital with much higher levels of care needed from the nurse and nursing assistants. Can you imagine, your loved one in Long-term care setting and only seeing a flash of the nurse in eight hours? Can you imagine, you worked hard your whole life with the reassurance that the government was going to take care of you? What a slap in the face to our ill and aging population. But today we are all here to talk about changing Connecticut's mandated hours per patient to 4.1. This bill would be an improvement. I only ask that you change LPN hours to .75 instead of keeping them at .54.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the year of the pandemic. We now call ourselves Heroes to Zeroes. I will never forget the sheer fear in the eyes of even the most seasoned of floor staff. But, we showed up, day after day. Shrouded by gross uncertainty, and without PPE, we would not abandon our patients. For those of us that survived, we then suffered layoffs which made staffing even worse. Why the layoffs? Money of course. This bill mandates minimum staffing hours that make sense, and requires PPE stockpiles in the event of a future public health emergency. These Corporations will continue to squeeze every last ounce of life from direct care givers like me and our patients if you don't pass this legislation.

Every patient I serve could be my mother, father, brother or sister. Or, they could be yours! Scares me from the side of the fence I'm on. We the floor staff are good, kind, hardworking people. We keep climbing the hill, but never get to the top. We leave everyday exhausted and yet unable to finish. Isn't it time to support this country's heroes. The time for talk has been long over. Thank you for your sincere attention to this. Please pass Senate Bill 1030.