



SEIUHealthcare
United for Quality Care

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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 Tracy Nicolo, I live in Vernon, CT, and have worked as a CNA at the Foxhill Center nursing home for 5 years. I come before you today in support of SB 1030 with changes.

I love being a CNA. Taking care of my residents gives me pride, and I love going into work knowing I can make them feel comfortable, clean, and loved. While I do love my job, it can be very frustrating dealing with low staffing, a lack of PPE, and poor training.

There is a direct connection between staffing levels and the quality of care residents receive. We contend with low staffing at my home and it negatively impacts staff moral as well as the quality of care. I typically have 14 to 20 people to care for on my shift. This makes me feel rushed to get all my tasks done. Giving less care is not an option for me, and so I must rush around and get worn down in order to get everything done. It takes longer, and we lose our breaks because we can't afford to take them. This leaves me and my co-workers exhausted and stressed.

Another aspect of my work that stresses me out is the inadequate supply of PPE. Even outside of a pandemic it is important to wear appropriate PPE when providing care for residents, but to not have the appropriate PPE during a pandemic is just insulting. My coworkers and I were told to reuse PPE that was intended for single use, we had PPE hidden from us, or locked away. All the while we were told we must risk our lives and our families' lives by coming to work during a pandemic. Of course we continued to work because we care about our residents, but we felt disrespected none the less.

To make matters worse, we were not given adequate infection control education and training. Then when we were offered training, they were basic and one in English. We are a diverse staff, caring for a diverse population, we need bilingual infection control education and training.

That is why I support SB 1030 with changes. This bill seeks to address major issues in the nursing home industry, such as low staffing, inadequate PPE stockpiles, and lacking infection control training. All of these provisions would greatly improve and strengthen this industry, not only for workers but for the residents we care for as well. Please pass SB 1030 with changes.

Thank you for your time.