

January 31st, 2022

## Kansas State Nurses Association Opposes House Bill 2524

Dear Mr. Chair and Kansas Representatives,

The Kansas State Nurses Association (KSNA) and constituent members of the American Nurses Association (ANA) both the largest in our state and country asks for this committee to oppose HB 2524 until we have concrete solutions for the healthcare staffing crisis in Kansas. It is important to hear the voices of our RN's, LPN's, and CNA's and not large corporate-owned long-term care facilities only. It is us who could provide the solutions if the conversations included our important input in the discussions.

As a Registered Nurse, we have the right to make higher wages that are not provided by long-term care historically or now. KACE presented a report last week that the average pay in long-term care for an RN is \$25 an hour. That is well below our countries average for RN's pre-COVID with Kansas being in the bottom 5 states for RN pay. It can be applied to all our licensed and certified healthcare workers. Agencies are not "poaching" our nurses. They are providing us with the choice to decide the hours we work and the pay that we all need to care for our families and ourselves. And, I would add, our student loans.

Who is going to relieve personnel if agency staff is not available? If there is only one RN or LPN working, they are not allowed to leave until they have someone to cover their shift. It is considered job abandonment if we left without coverage, and we could lose the license that we worked incredibly hard to obtain. In an already overworked, overstressed, exhaustive time, do we really want to tell that employee, who may have been working over 12 hours, that they can't leave? They can't take a break. They can't eat lunch. All because our long-term care homes, most who are corporate owned in Kansas, that they do not want to pay extra for the well-being of their staff. One of the reasons staff are leaving in the first place. And over-regulating agencies is not going to bring back the staff that are needed right now.

If we are going to look at regulations, the regulations that are needed are those that hold the long-term care facilities accountable.

We can't overregulate an agency to the point where those staff are not available to provide the high quality of care that resident needs and deserve. Residents deserve trained and licensed providers of healthcare. Any healthcare employee who is at the stage of exhaustion, depression, working too many hours can't provide the level of care needed for residents. And this is who it is about.

The Kansas State Nurses Association, along with ANA, have been working on permanent solutions that we need now for staffing. No bill that allows a TNA to work in place of a CNA, or decreased education of a CNA is going to solve the problem of staffing without directly hurting our residents.

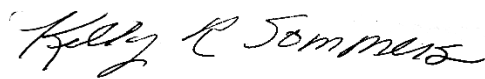
For these reasons, and more, we are going to strongly oppose this bill until better solutions are put in place that includes RN's, LPNs, and CNAs in the discussion. We are the advocates for those in long-term care, for our communities, and for ourselves. It is us who provides the adequate solutions that should be put in place now.

Additionally, we will oppose any bill that changes the education a CNA receives, that changes instructors, and changes clinical time that they need to perform their level of skills.

Thank you for your attention in this matter and for your well wishes for staff and the people we serve.

Best regards,

**Kansas State Board of Directors,**



**Kelly Sommers**

*State Director*

Kansas State Nurses Association

[director@ksnurses.com](mailto:director@ksnurses.com)

