

Hello,

My name is Ginger Rose and I am writing in opposition of House Bill 2524.

In the last 2 years since Covid began, nurses were deemed essential workers, heroes. Why? Because they were doing a job no one else wanted to do.

They were constantly exposed to a virus that was unknown and foreign as to its deadliness. Forced to work long hours, expose family members, and due to supply shortages, forced to wear the same PPE gear for weeks.

I watched as they bravely came to work exhausted because we didn't have enough staff. And also because of staffing shortages, were also forced to work as kitchen staff. So exhausted, sleeping in chairs in the breakroom. Now, these same heroes, essential workers, are being let go because they don't want to be vaccinated. Told they are going to work longer, perform jobs as servers, and we are going to cap your pay.

Nurses are tired and burned out. We are two years into a pandemic, with no end in sight. They have sacrificed so much for so little. Now is not the time to cap wages.

Agency has allowed them to have days off as needed, pay off bills and student loans, and given them the flexibility to watch their children in events. Nurses are quitting and leaving the profession that they love. Why would they continue to work 12-16 hours days, no days off, no family time, for \$13.00 an hour? They can make more at Spangles, Walmart, Quik Trip etc., and work less hours, and not have to worry about bringing the virus home.

I have been witness to the love, care and devotion these professionals give their residents. Going above and beyond to create relationships with residents and their families. Holding their hands as they take their last breaths. Being a support system for the families. Making sure that during lockdowns, when families could not go into the facilities, they were able to help the residents call their loved ones, and some taught the residents how to "Face Time", so that they still had a connection outside of the facility. Some were taking time to play games with the residents to keep their morale up. Others would use their lunch hour to take silly photos using "Snap Chat" filters with each of the residents, which made them laugh, and showed them that someone cared about their mental health, not only their physical health. One health care worker I know asked her son to come sing Christmas carols from outside the facility with a PA system, just to give the residents a little taste of Christmas while they were in lockdown. He did, in 30 degree weather, while the residents watched from their windows, and smiled. The hearts of these workers are so big and so giving.

These are the true heroes. These are the essential workers. These are the people we trust our mother's, father's, aunt's, uncle's, and grandparent's lives to. Don't take away their chance to earn a decent living. HB2524 will destroy the medical field. Who then will take care of our loved ones who can no longer care for themselves?

Thank you.