



April 9, 2026

Subject: Testimony in Support of H-7031, Joint Resolution Creating a Joint Legislative Study Commission on Safe Staffing in Hospitals — Submitted by a Member of SEIU 1199NE

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services:

I work as an Administrative Assistant at Women & Infants Hospital and have been at the hospital for 20 years, including the last five in this role. My testimony is in support of House Bill 7031 to create the Hospital Staffing Commission.

In addition to acting as executive secretary to the Medical Director of my unit, my position largely focuses on coordinating with several other departments, including purchasing and supply chain, maintenance, and IT to make sure the unit runs smoothly. My job is to make the nurses' jobs easier so that they can focus on patient care. I try to anticipate their needs and support them in any way I can.

Last year, the hospital moved to consolidate my position across units and, as a result, another unit was added to my responsibilities after several clerical staff were laid off, including the NICU Administrative Assistant.

Before the restructuring, I worked 40 hours a week, and I still work 40. However, the addition of the new unit adds almost a part-time job to my existing full-time position.

With this additional workload, I feel that I am not able to do my job at the level of quality it requires. There are only so many hours in a day, so I have to prioritize what is most important. In the past, I had time to round on the unit more frequently. I could identify potential problems early, find supplies that were running low, order backup supplies, and ensure equipment was functional and ready for use. Now it is much harder to complete those kinds of proactive tasks. The units I'm responsible for are across the hospital from each other on different floors. Just traveling up to my second unit takes time. Any extra projects to improve workflow have become

more challenging to complete. It often feels like I am simply treading water and cannot get ahead.

Despite the increased workload, my compensation has stayed the same.

This situation has also affected my mental health. There is rarely any true downtime, and sometimes it feels like I cannot even take a few minutes to make a coffee without falling further behind. It is challenging to take any time off at all, even if I am sick, let alone for vacation. There are days when it is 3:30 in the afternoon before I realize that I have not eaten yet. I come home mentally exhausted and find myself falling behind on tasks and chores there too.

Many staff members have left for other positions that are less stressful. I do not want to leave, but it sometimes feels like the expectation has gradually shifted toward accepting mediocrity because the system is stretched so thin.

All of this contributes to a growing level of burnout and frustration.

I believe there should be greater investment in staff, especially support staff. There are many roles throughout the hospital that people may not even think about. Housekeeping staff ensure that patient rooms are properly cleaned; dietary staff are essential for patient nutrition; CNAs support patient care and keep rooms stocked with necessary supplies; clerical staff bridge communications between patients, nurses, and different disciplines across departments. These roles often work behind the scenes, but everyone plays an important role, and each person contributes something essential. Everything is interconnected. Healthcare really does take a village.

We are all part of that village—those who provide care, those who receive care, and those who may need care someday. And as the elected leaders of our village, we are looking to you to help us create a more sustainable system. The Hospital Staffing Commission is a critical first step toward that goal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Colleen Hoover, Administrative Assistant
Women & Infants Hospital