

Representative Deborah Fellela

Chairwoman, House Committee on Health and Human Services

Rhode Island State House

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H-7031 – Joint Resolution Creating a Special Legislative Commission to Study Safe Staffing Ratios in Hospitals

Dear Chairwoman Fellela and Chairman Hull,

My name is Zachary Gauthier, and I am writing to you today to express my heartfelt support for H-7031.

We often talk about systems—transportation systems, economic systems, and healthcare systems—but at the heart of every system are the human beings who keep them running. When we talk about staffing ratios in our hospitals, we aren't just talking about numbers on a spreadsheet or hours on a clock. We are talking about the weary hands of a nurse who has been on her feet for twelve hours and the anxious eyes of a patient waiting for help that is delayed because there simply aren't enough people to go around.

In my work within our community, I have seen firsthand what happens when our essential services are stretched thin. Whether it is a bus that never comes or a call bell that goes unanswered, the result is the same: a loss of dignity and a compromise of safety for our neighbors. Our healthcare workers are the backbone of Rhode Island's recovery and resilience. To ask them to provide world-class care without the necessary support is not just a policy failure; it is a failure of our responsibility to care for those who care for us.

H-7031 is a vital step toward understanding the reality of the situation on the ground. By creating this commission, we are choosing to listen to the experts and the workers. We are choosing to prioritize the safety of every Rhode Islander who enters a hospital room.

I urge you and the rest of the committee to support this resolution. Let's ensure that our hospitals are places of healing where both the patient and the provider have the resources they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Zachary Gauthier