



April 28, 2026

**Subject: Testimony in Support of S-2258, Joint Resolution Creating a Joint Legislative Study Commission on Safe Staffing in Hospitals — Submitted by a Member of SEIU 1199NE**

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

I am a Registered Nurse at Butler Hospital. I offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2258.

To me, safe staffing means that care is delivered with the attention, mindfulness, and foresight necessary to prevent injury and further illness for both patients and caretakers.

The current state of healthcare is unacceptable. Nurses and patients are trapped in a precarious gap between what is clinically possible and what management—and the state—are willing to accept. There is a profound disconnect between administrative policy and the on-the-ground reality of nursing. Historically, collaboration between the state and hospital management has often been conciliatory toward unfit conditions, prioritizing the status quo over the safety of the workforce.

While I look to examples like California’s mandatory minimum staffing ratios as a vital intervention, I view this bill as a necessary milestone rather than a final destination. I believe a permanent solution lies in the democratic allocation of hospital resources, determined by the staff who provide the care rather than the constraints of an ownership class. While full workplace democracy may be a long-term goal, implementing mandatory ratios is an essential step on the road toward that end.

Speaking on these issues is difficult. Healthcare practitioners often stay silent out of a sense of self-preservation or sheer exhaustion. Because of this, the internal struggles of our hospitals have become a “black box” to the public. However, the manifestations of this crisis are clear: patients are falling through the cracks and suffering avoidable harm.

We enter healthcare because the desire to do good fulfills a fundamental human need. Our employers understand this; they often exploit our dedication, pushing us into dangerous situations because they know we will absorb the struggle for the sake of our patients. But healthcare workers are losing faith.

This bill is a step toward the system we ultimately need—one that better reflects the realities of care delivery and the voices of those providing it.

I urge you to support S-2258. It is in the best interest of the state to provide this protection before the foundation of our healthcare system erodes further.

Sincerely,

Omar Padua, RN  
Butler Hospital