



Alaska Nurses
Association

The unified voice of nurses in the Last Frontier

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January 31st, 2025

The Honorable Ashley Carrick, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
State Capitol, Room 406
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: HB 61 Employment of Minors
Dear Representative Carrick,

We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association in opposition of HB 61 section 1, an act exempting certain employees from overtime pay requirements and providing for an effective date. Although this bill is discussing the work schedules of minors, this section has been inserted to apply to all individuals regardless of age to be exempted from overtime pay requirements after 8 hours for employees who work a 40-hour work week with 8 hours a day schedule. With employers already having the ability to pursue a 40-hour work week schedule with a 10 hour a day straight time component the adoption of Section 1 creates a disparity on employees who may not have representation to consider a reduction in compensation.

With the exodus of nurses leaving the hospital bedside for alternative healthcare settings, such as surgery centers, hospice facilities, and long-term care institutions, the move to a decreased work week of 8-hour shifts with no night, weekend or holiday hours has become the surrogate for a preferable work-life balance for nursing.

Under this bill, if a nurse is scheduled for a 12-hour shift and only 8 hours of surgery are conducted the nurse is sent home and must utilize their own PTO (paid time off) or leave without pay to compensate for the additional 4 hours missed. Once the PTO balance is used, these jobs will become more like part-time work particularly during slow periods.

The National Library of Medicine found in a study of acute care nurses, it has been reported that 12-hour shifts lead to deficient performance due to physiological strain, fatigue, burn-out and job dissatisfaction, which consequently negatively impacts patient care and safety.

A number of studies of US hospital nurses demonstrated that the risks of making an error are significantly increased when work shifts are longer than 12-hour, when nurses work overtime, or when they worked more than 40 hour per week.¹ In a number of similar studies, nurses working shifts of 12-hour or more and those working overtime, reported lower quality and safety, increased risk of errors and decreased nurses' vigilance.

We ask that you stand alongside Alaska's nurses and patients in opposition to allowing section 1 of HB 61 to be made into law and continuing to support our nurses in caring for our families and communities.

Sincerely,



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¹ Rogers A, Hwang W, Scott L, et al. The working hours of hospital staff nurses and patient safety. *Health Aff* 2004; 23: 202–212. [[PubMed](#)] [[Google Scholar](#)]; and Geiger-Brown J, Trinkoff A. Is it time to pull the plug on 12-hour shifts?: part 1. *The evidence. J Nurs Admin* 2010; 3: 100–102. [[PubMed](#)] [[Google Scholar](#)]