



**Alaska Nurses
Association**

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February 27, 2020

Senator David Wilson
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wilson,

We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association and our 1,500 members in strong opposition to SB 179, the “Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact.”

The Alaska Nurses Association (AaNA) is the recognized leader and voice of nurses in Alaska. We work to improve patient safety, achieve safe working conditions, advance professional standards, and provide quality care for our patients and our communities. After careful review and consideration, we believe the current risks of joining the Nurse Licensure Compact are too great for the State of Alaska.

Alaska currently enjoys complete autonomy over the regulation of the profession of nursing, allowing local experts to make local decisions that are best for our state. Created by a private Chicago-based trade association, the Nurse Licensure Compact is administered by a powerful “Interstate Commission” with the power to adopt binding rules and assess payments from the states. If Alaska adopts the Nurse Licensure Compact, we will have ceded our right to determine and enforce the standards for practice that our policymakers have determined are necessary to protect the public.

The Nurse Licensure Compact also undermines the mission of the Alaska Board of Nursing by posing a threat to public safety. The Compact has no mechanism to monitor nurses coming into Alaska to practice from another participating state. There are also worrisome inconsistencies between states in regard to standards for nurses, including with initial and continuing education, criminal offenses, and disciplinary action. The Compact would allow out-of-state nurses practicing here to circumvent Alaska’s high standards, jeopardizing the high-quality care that Alaskans receive. These factors altogether hinder the State’s ability to protect the public.

Operational funds for the Alaska Board of Nursing are derived from the collection of application and licensing fees. 41 percent of nurses currently licensed in Alaska are nonresidents. Because Compact nurses would no longer be required to obtain an Alaska nursing license, the Board would see a significant decline in revenue. There are also numerous expenses associated with belonging to the Compact. While the Nurse Licensure



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Compact is a financially advantageous situation for out-of-state nurses and companies, the State of Alaska and its residents would face increased financial burden.

Finally, there remains no evidence to suggest that joining the Nurse Licensure Compact would help with nurse staffing. The nursing shortage exists nationwide, and joining the Compact will not suddenly nor magically bring a flood of nurses to Alaska to fill vacancies at needy facilities.

The Alaska Nurses Association remains committed to working with the Alaska Board of Nursing, Alaska Legislature, and others on effective regulatory measures that are workable and realistic, that offer real solutions, and that respect state sovereignty. None of this, unfortunately, describes the Nurse Licensure Compact. We can and must work toward better approaches that put Alaskans first.

We ask that you stand alongside Alaska's nurses and patients in opposition to joining the Nurse Licensure Compact. For more information, please contact Andrea Nutty, AaNA Programs Director at 907-274-0827 or andrea@aknurse.org.

Sincerely,

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