

## **Jody Simpson**

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**From:** Behm, Barbara N <bnbehm@anthc.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 06, 2020 2:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Alaska becoming a compact state

**I am a nurse that works in Alaska and I support the NLC!**  
Barbara N. Behm

## Jody Simpson

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**From:** Lauren Okoli <lauren.vallespir@providence.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 09, 2020 9:02 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Please support the multi-state Nurse Licensure Compact legislation

Dear Senate HSS Committee,

I am writing today to encourage your full support of SB 179, which allows Alaska to join 34 other states in a multistate nurse licensure compact (NLC). The goal of the NLC is to improve patient care by allowing qualified nurses to practice across state lines with a single license. Increasing the ability to hire and deploy qualified nurses in a timely fashion can make a significant difference in providing great care to patients. The NLC will help avoid costly delays in the licensing process and fill critical workforce shortages faster. This effort will help reduce fatigue and overtime for nursing staff, so a vote for NLC is an investment in patient safety!

The NLC is a helpful tool for recruiting and retention efforts in Alaska, and it also can be critical during times of emergency or disaster, allowing a nurse to easily cross state lines to help those in need. Finally, the NLC helps military families. Military spouses are burdened with applying for a new nursing license each time the family must relocate. Under the NLC, the spouse's employment can continue seamlessly.

Alaska nurses support the NLC. According to a 2019 survey of Alaska-licensed nurses, 92% supported joining the Compact including 87% of Alaska-licensed nurses who are members of a union.

Especially working in a rural, secluded town as Valdez, we have difficulty finding staff to come work here. If we had more to pull from we may have better patient outcomes and safety in our hospital. This allows us to help minimize the burden of overwhelming higher acuity hospitals in Anchorage with patients from our outlying communities by being able to provide care here. Please support this bill.

Thank you for considering this very important issue to nurses and patients in your district.

Sincerely,

Lauren Okoli  
PO Box 2895  
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lauren.vallespir@providence.org

3-8-2020

Senator Wilson,

As chair of the Health and Social Services Committee, you have heard a great deal of testimony about SB 179 (Nurse Licensure Compact Bill). Thirty-four states are currently in the compact, and eleven more (including Alaska) have active bills in their respective state legislatures. Soon, almost every state in the country will be part of this compact.

I am a registered nurse who lives in a compact state, and I enthusiastically support SB 179. I just watched videos of the HSS committee meetings that were held on 2/28, and 3/6, and I am thrilled to see how many people support this legislation. I noticed that several congressmen had questions about this bill, so there are a few points that I would like to mention. I work in a large 900 bed teaching hospital. Many of my co-workers are travel nurses; all of them are excellent clinicians. Some of them told me that they do not accept travel contracts in non-compact states. These nurses only have one nursing license (a compact license), because they can work in thirty-two (soon to be thirty-four) states with this license. Our unit is quite large; we could not function without our travel nurses.

Alaska is experiencing a nursing shortage. I have been a licensed RN for more than thirty years, and am very aware that it takes a special person to be a nurse. For many of us this profession is a calling. It involves a lot of hard work, the ability to multitask, and the emotional strength to deal with people who are going through extreme health challenges. Many new nursing grads are only accepting jobs in compact states. The states that do not join the eNLC will likely find it more difficult to recruit professional nurses.

Senator Giessel seems to think that improvements in the way that The Alaska Board of Nursing processes licenses will solve this nursing shortage problem. I don't think that improving the BON's efficiency is the answer to this issue. It recently took six months for me to obtain an RN license in a non-compact state. I submitted all of my paperwork correctly. I found out that one of my nursing school transcripts was either not submitted to the BON, even though I paid to have it sent, or it was misplaced. I can't afford to be unemployed for several months, so I did not accept a job in this state. If this state was a member of the eNLC, I would have started this job immediately. When a nurse changes her legal residence from one compact state to another, the eNLC rules allow her to work using her active license, as long as she promptly applies for a license in her new home state.

All of the nurses who obtain compact licenses are required to pass criminal background checks. According to information currently listed on the NCSBN (The National Council of the State Boards of Nursing) website, less than 1% of all licensed nurses are disciplined each year. It seems that a nurse who does not follow her state "nurse practice acts" is rare indeed.

I am excited and optimistic about the possibility of Alaska joining the Nurse Licensure Compact. Good health care should be readily available to all residents of our country; passing SB 179 will bring us one step closer to this noble goal.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ruiz-Goubert, BSN, RN, CGRN