

September 9, 2021

Honorable Sen. David Wilson, Chair of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 121

Juneau, AK 99801

Sent via email: Senator.David.Wilson@akleg.gov

Subject: Oppose SB 67 – Nurse Licensure Compact

Dear Senator Wilson:

The multistate Nurse Licensure Compact would be a poor disservice to Alaska's registered nurses, the integrity of our Alaska health care system, and our patient care. I had the honor of serving on the Alaska Board of Nursing from 2010-2014, and I am a retired attorney. Based on my experience, I have seen the importance of our stringent Alaska protocol for nurse licensing as well as the Board's agility to address local Alaska Employer needs with expedited processes. The Compact would reduce Alaskan control, wrongly cede Alaska's sovereignty to the Lower-48, and thus decreasing our quality of patient care for Alaskans.

Under the current system, we Alaskans are responsible for the key decisions for nursing standards. I have seen our system first-hand, and the Alaska Board of Nursing should retain the authority to do what's best for Alaskans. With the Nurse Licensure Compact, state authority would go to an interstate commission, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, a private Lower-48 trade association. There is no independent oversight or accountability to Alaskans for their decision-making to ensure it is acting in the best interests of Alaska.

Alaska has high standards for nurse licensing to protect public health and safety. Participating in the Nurse Licensure Compact would mean Alaska would follow uniform licensure requirements, which are often less rigorous. Joining the Compact would further reduce revenues for the state and increase fees for Alaskans seeking licenses. Finally, the Compact does not present a solution to growing workforce needs. We should focus on training and workforce development to support and retain Alaska nurses.

For the sake of our nurses and our patient care, please oppose SB 67. It is critical that Alaskans continue to set standards for Alaska rather than letting Outside interests control Alaska nurse licensing.

Respectfully,

Kevin Dougherty
Eagle River, AK

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