



Health Professionals and Allied Employees

Debbie White, RN, BSN – HPAE President
Barbara Rosen, RN, BSN – HPAE First Vice-President
Alexis Rean-Walker, BS – HPAE Secretary-Treasurer
Chris Whalen – HPAE Executive Director

The Honorable Jesse Sumner
Chairman
House Labor & Commerce Committee
120 Fourth Street, Room 3
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Letter of Opposition - HB 149, Nurse Licensure Compact
The Honorable Jesse Sumner:

I am writing on behalf of Health Professionals & Allied Employees, AFT to encourage Alaska to reject to HB 149, the “Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact.” HPAE is the largest New Jersey healthcare union representing 14,000 Nurses and Healthcare workers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

After careful review and consideration, we believe the risks of joining the Nurse Licensure Compact are too great for the State of Alaska. These risks include a loss of state sovereignty, threats to public safety, erosion of quality patient care and weakened standards for the practice of nursing, and a loss of state revenue.

A major argument by proponents of the Compact is the change will help Alaska deal with its nursing shortage. Unfortunately, there is no meaningful evidence to suggest that joining the Nurse Licensure Compact would help. 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. **Furthermore, the Compact is a door that swings both ways—joining the Compact will likely contribute to a nurse shortage when Alaska resident nurses decide to leave the state and become travelers.**

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 sole authority to adopt binding rules and assess payments from the states. **If Alaska adopts the Nurse Licensure Compact, Alaska will cede it’s right to determine and enforce nurse licensing standards that your state’s policymakers have determined are necessary to protect the public.** In many cases, it also undermines local control over practice decisions such as adhering to Alaska’s continuing education requirements for nurses.

The Nurse Licensure Compact undermines the mission of the Alaska Board of Nursing by posing a threat to public safety and health. The Nurse Licensure Compact has no mechanism to

identify or monitor nurses coming into a state to practice from another participating Compact state. There are worrisome inconsistencies between states regarding standards for nurses – including for initial and continuing education, criminal offenses, and disciplinary action. The Compact would allow out-of-state nurses practicing in Alaska to circumvent your State’s high standards, jeopardizing the high-quality patient care that Alaskans currently receive. These factors altogether hinder the State’s ability to protect the public.

Joining the Compact means Alaska will be forced to abandon a rigorous licensing and vetting process and become totally dependent on other Compact states to weed out so-called “bad actors” **who obtain a license under cloudy circumstances, including fraudulent diplomas and transcripts which came to light, in January 2023, with the U.S. Department of Justice’s “Operation Nightingale.”** Additionally, Alaska will not be able to identify a nurse with a Compact license with a pending disciplinary action in another state.

Thank you,

**Debbie White, RN
Health Professionals & Allied Employees, AFT**

Dear Representative Sumner:

My name is Donna Phillips and I'm writing to urge you to oppose HB 149, introduced last week.

I am a licensed register nurse in Girdwood, Alaska, and I have worked at the bedside in the intensive care unit at an Anchorage hospital for 28 years. I oppose this bill because entering in the Nurse Licensure Compact (which is administered by a non- governmental trade organization) will allow nurses to work in our state and circumvent Alaska's high standard required by nurses currently working in Alaska.

While some will profess that this will bring nurses to our state to work, I do not believe this is true, as it has not decreased the hospital nursing vacancies in other states that are in the NLC. I would challenge facilities to work on retention of the nurses that they employ. Nurses leave their hospital jobs because of the extremely difficult patient loads. The moral injury that this leaves nurse with can only be sustained for so long. They look for jobs that are less stressful on their lives.

I have seen the workloads on the bedside nurse increase due to the acuity/ illness of the hospitalized patient over my 43-year career in providing bedside nursing care. The requirement on the nurses have increased without any decrease on the duties that nurses must continually re-prioritized during their 12-hour shift due changes in patient conditions. We need to keep Alaskan nurses working in Alaska. Patients have a right to know that our state has provided licensure to each and every clinician that may care for them at one of the most vulnerable times of their lives. We need to have a solution that includes streamlining processes at our Board of Nursing.

Please oppose this bill. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Donna Phillips, BSN, RN

Dear Representative Sumner:

My name is Stacey Sever and I'm writing to urge you to oppose HB 149. I am a licensed nurse in Anchorage, Alaska, and work at Providence Alaska Medical Center. I am writing to you about my concerns regarding the Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact. I oppose this bill for many reasons that I will outline below:

- The Compact would allow out-of-state nurses practicing here to circumvent Alaska's high standards that are in place per the Alaska Board of Nursing and thus jeopardizing the high-quality patient care that Alaskans currently receive.
- Continuing education is extremely important in improving or maintaining skills, knowledge, and practice; however, it is not nationally mandated.
- There are states that do not require nurses to take continuing education to renew their licenses, and several of those states are within the compact. States within the compact that do not require continuing education are Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin. (AMN Healthcare Education Services, 2023)

Per the email sent out by the Alaska State Board of Nursing:

It will also allow Alaska's hospitals and health care facilities to fill vacancies more quickly so that our hard working nurses can work more reasonable shifts; and encourage new graduates to stay in Alaska or return to the state after being a travel nurse for a few years.

- There is no meaningful evidence to suggest that joining the Nurse Licensure Compact would help address the nationwide shortage of nurses. In fact, joining the Compact would likely have the unintended consequence of driving nurses out of state to other compact states.
- As of February 2023, New Mexico, Vermont, West Virginia, Ohio, Florida and Arizona currently have major hospital staff shortages. These are Nurse Licensure Compact states.
- Many other states within the compact are also experiencing debilitating nursing shortages despite being part of the compact.
- The State of Alaska has a process in place for addressing nursing shortages per the Nurse Emergency Courtesy License that was used during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The risks of joining the Nurse Licensure Compact are too great for the State of Alaska. These risks include a loss of state sovereignty, threats to public safety, erosion of quality patient care and weakened standards for the practice of nursing.

There will also be a loss of state revenue at a time when the state is working with a current budget deficit already.

If Alaska adopts the Nurse Licensure Compact, we will cede our right to determine and enforce nurse licensing standards that our policymakers have determined are necessary to protect the public.

Please oppose this bill. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Stacey Sever, BSN RN CCDS

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Stacey Sever, BSN RN CCDS
Health and Safety Officer
AaNA



**Alaska Nurses
Association**

3701 East Tudor Road, Suite 208
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
907.274.0827
www.aknurse.org

April 7, 2023

The Honorable Jesse Sumner
Chairman
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RE: Letter of Opposition - HB 149, Nurse Licensure Compact

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We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association (AaNA) and our 1,500 members in strong opposition to HB 149, the "Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact." AaNA is the recognized leader and voice of nurses in Alaska. Our core purpose includes working on issues that affect nurse licensure and practice in Alaska.

The Alaska Nurses Association works to advance and support the profession of nursing and to improve healthcare for all Alaskans. Our members strive 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 risks of joining the Nurse Licensure Compact are too great for the State of Alaska.** These risks include a loss of state sovereignty, threats to public safety, erosion of quality patient care and weakened standards for the practice of nursing, and a loss of state revenue.

A major argument by proponents of the Compact is the change will help Alaska deal with its nursing shortage. Unfortunately, there is no meaningful evidence to suggest that joining the Nurse Licensure Compact would help. 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. **Furthermore, the Compact is a door that swings both ways—joining the Compact will likely contribute to our nurse shortage when Alaska resident nurses decide to leave the state and become travelers.**

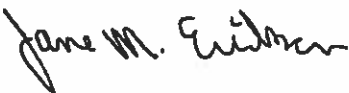
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The Nurse Licensure Compact undermines the mission of the Alaska Board of Nursing by posing a threat to public safety and health. The Nurse Licensure Compact has no mechanism to identify or monitor nurses coming into Alaska to practice from another participating Compact state. There are worrisome inconsistencies between states regarding standards for nurses – including for 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 patient care that Alaskans currently receive. These factors altogether hinder the State's ability to protect the public.

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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.



Jane Erickson, RN, CCRN
Board of Directors | President
Alaska Nurses Association



Terra Colegrove, RN
Board of Directors | Vice-President
Alaska Nurses Association



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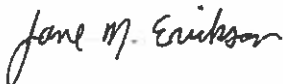
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Donna Phillips, BSN, RN
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ALASKA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LABORERS

Laborers' International Union of North America

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April 12, 2023

Joey Merrick

Business Manager
Secretary-Treasurer
District Council

Business Manager
Laborers' Local 341

House Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Legislature

House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov

Subject: HB 21 Opposition and Fiscal Impact Concerns

Jacob Howdeshell

President
District Council

Business Manager
Laborers' Local 942

Dear Members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee:

The Alaska District Council of Laborers writes in opposition to HB 21 based on concerns about fiscal impacts to public employees and the State of Alaska. We believe there are two key unintended consequences that, at a minimum, require deeper analysis before making the proposed changes. First, bringing in these groups could potentially result in rising costs for the State of Alaska and current AlaskaCare participants. Second, encouraging a trend in plan-switching could destabilize longstanding health trusts that are jointly managed by representatives of labor and employers.

The Alaska District Council of Laborers is made up of over 5,000 Alaskans working in the construction, oil and gas, service, tourism, public, and healthcare sectors. We represent around 1,600 public employees including employees at the State of Alaska, Fairbanks North Star Borough, City of Fairbanks, Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority, Anchorage School District, City of Wasilla, Haines Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, and City of Dillingham. Our members plow our highways, provide transportation to vulnerable community members, maintain our Pioneer Homes, clean our schools, and provide other public services that are imperative for the safety and prosperity of our communities.

HB 21 carries the potential for unintended financial consequences for the State of Alaska and AlaskaCare participants.

Before making this policy change, the analysis on the financial impacts to the State of Alaska and premiums for current AlaskaCare participants should be completed. Because this bill would enable many smaller employee groups to be transferred from their current plans to AlaskaCare, it would be prudent for AlaskaCare to perform a deeper analysis on the trends and financial impacts for each group to ensure long-term sustainability. To the extent that this transfer increases costs for AlaskaCare, it is unclear whether the State of Alaska or employee participants would be responsible for paying those increased costs.



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