

I am a Registered Nurse with an Alaskan License, and I am supportive of HB 149.

I would like to bring in potentially a new perspective on the subject.

I do indeed have a license to practice nursing in Alaska, however, my residency is not located in Alaska. One thing that is preventing me from becoming a resident of Alaska and taking on a commitment of fulfilling a staff position, rather than a travel position, is that I would lose my current compact license.

As you know, the population in Alaska is much higher during the summer months, than the winter months.

According to Alaska Resource Development Council, "visitation records have been set year-after-year with an estimated 2.26 million visitors" during the summer season in 2019.

These numbers have certainly fluctuated with the pandemic, which is why I chose data prior to 2020. However, the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development Research and Analysis "anticipates cruise ships visitors in record numbers in 2023" alone.

The way that some (probably most, if not all) hospitals have attempted to prepare for this influx in population has been to create staff positions such as "seasonal" or "job sharing". (seasonal meaning for the summer season; job sharing meaning working 6 months out of the calendar year here). This helps prevent the reliance on Traveling Nurses that Alaska needs to take care of locals and tourists. (Travel Nurses require higher pay and can only stay in one working area for a maximum of 12 months out of 24 months)

I personally have turned down multiple offers for staff seasonal/job sharing positions with the number one reason being, I would lose my compact nursing license.

At this moment, I can keep my residency in MO, my compact license, and take Travel positions to different areas in Alaska, and then return home to care for my family and/or work in other states of need included in the compact licensure.

If I moved my residency to Alaska, I would lose the flexibility to go back to help my elderly parents/extended family or the ability to work in another state during the "off season" in Alaska.

On another perspective,

When applying for my Alaskan Nursing License, I spent over a month waiting to work (past the start date of my job, which accounted for the suspected wait time of licensure approval) due to the lengthy process of approval. This left the hospital short of nurses and me temporarily unemployed. I am sure this is not the only occurrence as I have spoke with many other alike that have experienced similar, or worse, wait times that burden the local hospitals and community.

I am unsure why Alaska has been against joining the compact as I believe it would truly help the desperate need to fill healthcare positions here in Alaska and would not cause any harm or change "the ways of the Alaskan culture", nursing or not.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Brittany Walter, RN