

Good morning,

My name is Catherine Tomaszewski. I am a registered nurse currently at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. I am encouraging you all to support house bill 149 regarding making Alaska a compact state for nurses. Making Alaska a compact state would benefit everyone. I have seen first-hand how long it takes for a nurse to get a license in Alaska. Alaska becoming a compact state would also mean that there would be more healthcare options as there are limited healthcare options now. There would be more access to healthcare across the state with Alaska becoming a compact state. I encourage you all to support House Bill 149 which would allow Alaska to join the other 38 states that are already compact states.

Thank you for your time,  
Catherine Tomaszewski

Hello,

I'm a registered nurse in Sitka, Alaska and I'm supporting HB 149 so Alaska can join the NLC. As a single parent with family in various states, I think it's invaluable to be able to practice easily in other NLC states without the added stress of paying for a license in another state and waiting for licensure to go through. There is a nursing shortage across the country and I believe that Alaska being part of the NLC may help to draw nurses here/speed along the process.

I tried to call in to the hearing but ran out of time before I had to go back to my lunch, so I'm making my voice heard via email.

Sincerely,

Gina Lusher, RN

I am in full support for Alaska to endorse the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) HB 149. I am a Nursing Director who works in Anchorage and experiences firsthand the difficulties of maintaining a workforce to meet Alaska Healthcare needs. With the pandemic we have seen a large disparity in nurses to receive AK State Licensure to work in our communities. We have lost many eligible nurses due to the amount of time and red tape it takes for the State Board of Nursing to process applications for licensure. This is a deterrent from nurses applying and adding to our Alaska Workforce, to meet the needs of our states residents who require healthcare.

Our community is aging, and we are at a nursing crisis nationally. The World Health Organization (WHO) revealed the global nursing workforce was at 27.9 million and estimated there was a global shortfall of 5.9 million nurses in 2020. With the ageing of the nursing workforce, 17% of nurses globally are expected to retire within in the next ten years, and 4.7 million additional nurses will need to be educated and employed just to maintain current workforce numbers, let alone address the shortages. In total, 10.6 million additional nurses will be needed by 2030.

In Alaska our existing pool of healthcare workers is insufficient to meet current and growing demands. Alaska must reduce its red tape to remain competitive in a nationwide health care worker shortage. The NLC does not change nursing practices. It only changes how licensed professionals obtain a license in another state. It does not sacrifice quality of care, safety, or local state control. Nurses would be subject to the discipline and laws of the Board of Nursing in their state of residence.

Relying on temporary nurses is unsustainable and does not invest in Alaska's future. Joining the NLC provides us another tool in the toolbox to grow our workforce, support retention efforts and provide healthcare for our residents of Alaska. Alaska needs to be competitive in our licensing practices to support bringing healthcare workers into our workforce with the red tape barriers removed. We can not compete with other states whose processes are significantly faster than ours.

This is not just a healthcare issue; it is a workforce issue. Growing a robust efficient Healthcare system directly impacts all of the residents in our communities and the Alaska healthcare organizations to attract, retain and support healthcare workers.

Brenda Franz

April 14, 2023

The Honorable Mike Prax  
Alaska House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol, Rm 108  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Support for House Bill 149 – Nurse Licensure Compact

Dear Representative Prax,

The Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB)<sup>1</sup> writes in support of House Bill 149 (HB 149), which would enable Alaska to join the multistate Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). This legislation would allow qualified nurses to practice across state lines with a single license, streamlining the nurse licensure process, reducing nursing shortages, and improving access to healthcare services in Alaska.

<sup>1</sup> ANHB was established in 1968 with the purpose of promoting the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS), which is comprised of tribal health programs that serve all of the 229 Tribes and 180,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout the state. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB helps Alaska's Tribes and Tribal programs achieve effective consultation and communication with state and federal agencies on matters of concern.

<sup>2</sup> Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association. Alaska Health Care Workforce Analysis. November 2021. Accessed April 13, 2023.

[https://www.alaskahha.org/\\_files/ugd/ab2522\\_80a785bae6b94a9a8423cbf4d3886d3e.pdf](https://www.alaskahha.org/_files/ugd/ab2522_80a785bae6b94a9a8423cbf4d3886d3e.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> RegisteredNursing.org. Where the Largest Nursing Shortages Exist. Accessed April 13, 2023.

<https://www.registerednursing.org/articles/largest-nursing-shortages/>

Alaska is experiencing a severe healthcare workforce shortage with over 6,300 healthcare worker vacancies, including more than 1,400 registered nurse vacancies each year.<sup>2</sup> By 2030, Alaska is projected to have the highest nurse vacancy rate in the United States, with over 5,000 openings and a 22% shortfall.<sup>3</sup> The slow licensing process in Alaska is a significant barrier for nurses wanting to practice in the state, resulting in recruits regularly turning down jobs due to waiting months for a license. By joining the NLC, Alaska can streamline the nurse licensure process from three to four months to a matter of days, making it more efficient for nurses to obtain licensure in Alaska. This would increase the pool of qualified candidates that can fill critical vacancies more quickly and ensure that Alaskans have access to the healthcare they need when they need it.

In addition to addressing nursing shortages, joining the NLC would directly benefit the health of Alaska's rural and underserved communities. Nurse vacancies in Alaska facilities have increased to 24% and it takes an average of 161 days to fill a position, which can significantly limit access to care and increase costs, Page 2 of 2

especially in rural Alaska. 4

ANHB appreciates the opportunity to support HB 149, which would allow Alaska to adopt the NLC. The NLC has been in place for almost two decades and is currently used by 39 states and jurisdictions across the nation. By adopting the NLC, Alaska would align with national best practices and licensure reciprocity. If you have any comments or questions, you may contact ANHB by e-mail at [anhb@anhb.org](mailto:anhb@anhb.org) or by telephone at (907) 729-7510.

Sincerely,

William Smith, Chairman

Alaska Native Health Board

Tribally-Elected Leader of the Valdez Native Tribe