



Alaska Nurses
Association

The unified voice of nurses in the Last Frontier

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March 21, 2024

The Honorable Jesse Bjorkman, Chair
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association in opposition to SB 153, an act exempting certain employees from overtime pay requirements and providing for an effective date.

With the mass exodus of nurses leaving the hospital bedside for alternative healthcare settings, such as surgery centers, hospice facilities, and long-term care institutions, the move to a decreased work week of 8-hour shifts with no night, weekend or holiday hours has become the surrogate for a preferable work-life balance for nursing.

By this bill being implemented in the surgery center setting, if a nurse is scheduled for a 12 hour shift and only 8 hours of surgery are conducted the nurse is sent home and has to utilize their own PTO(paid time off) or leave without pay to compensate for the additional 4 hours missed. This means that the nurse is paying the center, and the facility does not have to pay the nurse for the time not utilized.

The National Library of Medicine found in a study of acute care nurses, it has been reported that 12-h shifts lead to deficient performance due to physiological strain, fatigue, burn-out and job dissatisfaction, which consequently negatively impacts patient care and safety.

A number of studies of US hospital nurses demonstrated that the risks of making an error are significantly increased when work shifts are longer than 12 h, when nurses work overtime, or when they worked more than 40 h per week.^{8,9} In a number of similar studies,

nurses working shifts of 12-h or more and those working overtime, reported lower quality and safety, increased risk of errors and decreased nurses' vigilance.

We ask that you stand alongside Alaska's nurses and patients in opposition to allowing SB 153 to be made into law and continuing to support our nurses in caring for our families and communities.

Sincerely,



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