

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 28(L&C)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 1/23/08

Referred: Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATOR DAVIS

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to limitations on mandatory overtime for registered nurses and**
2 **licensed practical nurses in health care facilities; and providing for an effective date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.** The legislature finds that

7 (1) it is essential that registered nurses and licensed practical nurses providing
8 direct patient care be available to meet the needs of patients;

9 (2) quality patient care is jeopardized by registered nurses and licensed
10 practical nurses who work unnecessarily long hours in health care facilities;

11 (3) registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are leaving their profession
12 because of workplace stresses, long work hours, and depreciation of their essential role in the
13 delivery of quality and direct patient care;

14 (4) it is necessary to safeguard the efficiency, health, and general well-being

1 of registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, and the health and general well-being of the
 2 persons receiving care from registered nurses and licensed practical nurses in health care
 3 facilities;

4 (5) it is necessary that registered nurses and licensed practical nurses be made
 5 aware of their rights, duties, and remedies concerning hours worked and patient safety; and

6 (6) health care facilities should provide adequate and safe nurse staffing
 7 without the need for or use of mandatory overtime.

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 18.20 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9 **Article 4. Overtime Limitations for Nurses.**

10 **Sec. 18.20.400. Limitations on nursing overtime.** (a) Except as provided in
 11 (c) of this section, a nurse in a health care facility may not be required or coerced,
 12 directly or indirectly,

13 (1) to work beyond a predetermined and regularly scheduled shift that
 14 is agreed to by the nurse and the health care facility;

15 (2) to work beyond 80 hours in a 14-day period; or

16 (3) to accept an assignment of overtime if, in the judgment of the
 17 nurse, the overtime would jeopardize patient or employee safety.

18 (b) Except as provided by (c) of this section, after working a predetermined
 19 and regularly scheduled shift that is agreed to by the nurse and the health care facility
 20 as authorized by (a)(1) of this section, a nurse in a health care facility shall be allowed
 21 not less than 10 consecutive hours of off-duty time immediately following the end of
 22 that work.

23 (c) Subsection (a) of this section does not apply to

24 (1) a nurse who is employed by a health care facility providing
 25 services for a school, school district, or other educational institution, when the nurse is
 26 on duty for more than 14 consecutive hours during an occasional special event, such as
 27 a field trip, that is sponsored by the employer;

28 (2) a nurse voluntarily working overtime on an aircraft in use for
 29 medical transport, so long as the shift worked is allowable under regulations adopted
 30 by the Board of Nursing based on accreditation standards adopted by the Commission
 31 on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems;

1 (3) a nurse on duty in overtime status because of an unforeseen
 2 emergency situation that could otherwise jeopardize patient safety; in this paragraph,
 3 "unforeseen emergency situation" means an unusual, unpredictable, or unforeseen
 4 situation caused by an act of terrorism, disease outbreak, natural disaster, or a declared
 5 national, state, or local emergency, but does not include a situation in which a health
 6 care facility has reasonable knowledge of increased patient volume or inadequate
 7 staffing because of some other cause, if that cause is foreseeable;

8 (4) a nurse fulfilling on-call time that is agreed upon by the nurse and a
 9 health care facility before it is scheduled;

10 (5) a nurse voluntarily working overtime so long as the work is
 11 consistent with professional standards and safe patient care and does not exceed 14
 12 consecutive hours;

13 (6) a nurse voluntarily working beyond 80 hours in a 14-day period so
 14 long as the nurse does not work more than 14 consecutive hours without a 10-hour
 15 break and the work is consistent with professional standards and safe patient care;

16 (7) the first hour on overtime status when the health care facility is
 17 obtaining another nurse to work in place of the nurse in overtime status.

18 **Sec. 18.20.410. Health care facility complaint process for overtime work**
 19 **by nurses.** A health care facility shall provide for an anonymous process by which a
 20 patient or a nurse may make a complaint about staffing levels and patient safety that
 21 relate to overtime work by nurses and to limitations on overtime work by nurses under
 22 AS 18.20.400.

23 **Sec. 18.20.420. Enforcement, offenses, and penalties.** (a) The commissioner
 24 shall administer AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 and adopt regulations for implementing and
 25 enforcing AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449.

26 (b) A complaint alleging a violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 must be filed
 27 with the commissioner within 30 days after the date of the alleged violation. The
 28 commissioner shall provide a copy of the complaint to the health care facility named
 29 in the filing within three business days after receiving the complaint.

30 (c) If the commissioner finds that a health care facility has knowingly violated
 31 an overtime provision of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449, the following civil penalties shall

1 apply:

2 (1) for a first violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449, the health care
3 facility shall receive a reprimand;

4 (2) for a second violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 within 12
5 months, the health care facility shall receive a reprimand and shall be assessed a
6 penalty of \$500;

7 (3) for a third violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 within 12 months,
8 the health care facility shall receive a reprimand and shall be assessed a penalty of not
9 less than \$2,500 but not more than \$5,000;

10 (4) for each violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 after a third
11 overtime violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 within 12 months, the health care
12 facility shall receive a public reprimand and shall be assessed a penalty of not less than
13 \$5,000 but not more than \$25,000.

14 (d) As an employer, a health care facility violates an overtime provision of
15 AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449 "knowingly" when the facility is either aware that its
16 conduct is of a nature prohibited by the overtime provision or aware that the
17 circumstances described in the overtime prohibition exist; however, when knowledge
18 of the existence of a particular fact is required in order to establish that the violation
19 was knowing, that knowledge exists when the facility is aware of a substantial
20 probability of its existence, unless the facility reasonably believes it does not exist.

21 **Sec. 18.20.430. Prohibition of retaliation.** A health care facility may not
22 discharge, discipline, threaten, discriminate against, penalize, or file a report with the
23 Board of Nursing against a nurse for exercising rights under AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449
24 or for the good faith reporting of an alleged violation of AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449.

25 **Sec. 18.20.440. Enforcement against prohibition of retaliation.** The
26 commissioner shall investigate every complaint alleging a violation of AS 18.20.430,
27 and, within 90 days after the complaint's date of filing, provide to the complainant, the
28 office of the attorney general, and the health care facility named in the complaint a
29 written determination as to whether the health care facility violated AS 18.20.430. If
30 the commissioner finds a violation of AS 18.20.430, the commissioner shall request
31 that the office of the attorney general represent the department and the complainant

1 and obtain from the health care facility all appropriate relief, including rehiring or
2 reinstatement of the complainant to the complainant's former position with back pay.

3 **Sec. 18.20.445. Report requirements.** A health care facility shall file with the
4 division of labor standards and safety, Department of Labor and Workforce
5 Development, a semiannual report. The report for the six-month period ending June 30
6 must be filed before the following August 1, and the report for the six-month period
7 ending December 31 must be filed before the following February 1. The report must
8 include, for each nurse employed by the health care facility or under contract with the
9 health care facility, the number of overtime hours worked, the number of overtime
10 hours that were mandatory, the number of overtime hours that were voluntary, the
11 number of on-call hours, the number of on-call hours that were mandatory, and the
12 number of on-call hours that were voluntary.

13 **Sec. 18.20.449. Definitions.** In AS 18.20.400 - 18.20.449,

14 (1) "commissioner" means the commissioner of labor and workforce
15 development;

16 (2) "health care facility" means a private, municipal, state, or federal
17 hospital; psychiatric hospital; independent diagnostic testing facility; residential
18 psychiatric treatment center; skilled nursing facility; kidney disease treatment center
19 (including freestanding hemodialysis units); intermediate care facility; ambulatory
20 surgical facility; Alaska Pioneers' Home or Alaska Veterans' Home administered by
21 the Department of Health and Social Services under AS 47.55; correctional facility
22 administered by the Department of Corrections or the Department of Health and
23 Social Services; private, municipal, state, or federal facility employing one or more
24 public health nurses; long-term care facility; or primary care outpatient facility;

25 (3) "nurse" means an individual licensed to practice registered nursing
26 or practical nursing under AS 08.68 who provides nursing services through direct
27 patient care or clinical services and includes a nurse manager when delivering in-
28 hospital patient care;

29 (4) "on-call" means a status in which a nurse must be ready to report to
30 the health care facility and may be called to work by the health care facility;

31 (5) "overtime" means the hours worked in excess of a predetermined

1 and regularly scheduled shift that is agreed to by a nurse and a health care facility.

2 * **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
3 read:

4 **APPLICABILITY.** The first report required to be filed under AS 18.20.445, enacted in
5 sec. 2 of this Act, shall be filed before February 1, 2009, for the period July 1, 2008, through
6 December 31, 2008.

7 * **Sec. 4.** AS 18.20.445, enacted in sec. 2 of this Act, and sec. 3 of this Act take effect
8 July 1, 2008.

9 * **Sec. 5.** Except as provided in sec. 4 of this Act, this Act takes effect January 1, 2009.