

Allie Collins
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The Honorable Richard Shelby
1800 5th Avenue North
321 Federal Building
Birmingham, AL 35203

Dear Senator Shelby,

My name is Allie Collins and I am currently a nursing student at Auburn University. I am writing you regarding legislation related to a prominent health care issue in today's society: nurse to patient ratio. This issue interests me because as a nursing student, I observe at first hand issues that arise from registered nurses having unmanageable patient ratios. This issue not only affects the nurses who are providing care, but it also affects patients and families who have the right to adequate care.

Nurse's practice is based on five principles: autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and veracity. The principles at risk are beneficence, the duty to do what is good for the patient, nonmaleficence, the right to not harm the patient in any way, and justice, providing each patient with equal care. A nurse with an insufficient patient ratio is not able to provide patients with acceptable care and may unintentionally provide harm to the patient.

I believe that Alabama should consider a law similar to California's RN Staffing Ratio Law that requires hospitals to follow nurse to patient ratios when providing care. These ratios can be based on each unit. For example, the intensive care unit patient ratio would be lower than a medical surgical unit ratio because ICU patients require more individual care due to their condition.

Staffing is a continuous problem in hospitals due to understaffing and unforeseen problems such as sickness; however, nurses should not suffer from these issues by having to forfeit their rights and ethics to agree to provide inadequate care for patients. This places nurses at risk for making mistakes and putting a patient's life in danger. In addition, it places patients at risk for insufficient attention and care that they deserve. I believe this law would prevent many medical errors, allow nurses to provide quality and equal care to each patient, contribute to and increase in nurse's job satisfaction, and allow patients to have the care they desire.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint of this issue. I look forward to seeing legislative action take place to resolve the subject at hand.

Sincerely,

Allie Collins