

March 30th, 2023

Marcy Kaptur
U.S. House of Representatives for Ohio

Dear Marcy Kaptur,

My name is Madison Proy, and I am a senior nursing student at Firelands Regional Medical Center School of Nursing located in Sandusky, Ohio. I am reaching out to you in concern for the future of the career I am entering. The ongoing nursing shortage is an issue that has caused burnout and fatigue in our country's healthcare system. Mandatory overtime and unfair nurse-to-patient ratios put our communities at risk. Nurses that are exhausted and overworked are more likely to make mistakes and in turn, risk the safety and well-being of the patients they assume care for. I for one do not feel comfortable caring for patients while working over 40 hours a week and potentially over 12 hours in a singular shift. The nursing shortage was an issue before the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this tragedy, we should be more aware than ever of the importance of nurses and proper staffing.

There are many causes linked to the nursing shortage we are facing. There are some things we cannot change such as an aging population causing an increase in demand and senior nurses retiring. But there is room for change and aspects that can be fixed to improve this issue. Educational costs steer potential future nurses away and current conditions of work environments cause nurses to quit. Aspects such as high schooling costs, high licensure costs, burnout related to lack of change, high patient-to-nurse ratios, mandatory overtime, and so forth are leading causes of the issue our country is facing.

There are steps that can be taken to increase the number of registered nurses in the United States and in turn fix the current nursing shortage issue. Promoting nursing as a career, offering options for increased affordability, offering better opportunities, increasing nursing education resources, paying for licensure exams, improving work conditions, adjusting protocols, and offering support to nurses leading change can all help promote change and fix the issue at hand. The biggest way to help with the current nursing shortage is to listen and address the registered nurses' concerns.

High patient-to-nurse ratios have been linked to increased mortality rates and patient errors. Staffing levels have a major effect on patient outcomes and cannot be ignored any longer. I look forward to hearing from you regarding this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Madison Proy