

Your Name: Olivia Arthur

Your Complete Address: 537 Ferndale Ave, Vermilion, OH 44089-2437

Ohio House of Representatives

Name of your Ohio Representative: Dick Stein

Party affiliation: Republican

District Number: 54

Hometown: Norwalk, OH

Expiration Date of Current Term: Not on site

Eligible for another term? Not on site (Currently serving 4th term)

Committee Assignments: Aviation and Aerospace Committee, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Infrastructure Committee, Public Utilities Committee

Ohio Senate

Name of your Ohio State Senator: Nathan H. Manning

Party Affiliation: Republican

District Number: 13

Hometown: North Ridgeville, OH

Expiration Date of Current Term: Not on Site

Eligible for another term? Not on Site (Currently serving 2nd term)

Committee Assignments: Finance Committee, Insurance Committee, Judiciary Committee, Local Government Committee

U.S. Senate

United States Senators Representing Ohio

- a. Name of Senator(s), including party, years of service, and year of term end
 1. Sherrod Brown: Democrat, House years of service: 103rd-109th (1993-2007), Senate years of service: 110th-118th (2007-present), term ends January 3, 2025
 2. James David Vance: Republican, Senate years of service: 118th (2023-present), term ends January 3, 2029

U.S. House of Representatives

Name of Congressional representative: Robert E. Latta

Party affiliation: Republican

District Number: 5

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Nathan H. Manning
Ohio State Senator

Dear Mr. Nathan H. Manning,

My name is Olivia Arthur and I am a senior nursing student at Firelands Regional Medical Center School of Nursing, located in Sandusky, Ohio. As we prepare for graduation on May 3, 2024, one of our final assignments is to write a letter to a legislator concerning a current issue in nursing practice that we are passionate about. I have chosen to discuss the issue of nursing staff shortages.

The United States is currently experiencing a crisis pertaining to nursing staff shortages and according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 42 out of 50 states are expected to experience nursing staff shortages. That is **84%** of our country. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also states that since February 2023, 42 medical centers in the United States have shut down certain medical departments or closed their facilities completely due to a lack of nursing staff. Not only does this affect the general population in the region closest to the facility closure, but it also impacts the economy. Hospital closure results in a significant loss of employment opportunities and potentially risks that regions opportunity for expansion. As the loss of nursing staff continues to rise, facility closure and economical losses will also continue to rise.

I could lead you down a rabbit hole of reasons as to why the U.S. is experiencing such significant nursing shortages, but I will highlight the most important for you. **Burnout** is one of the leading factors of nursing shortages. The COVID-19 global pandemic is a historical event that will never be forgotten, especially by healthcare workers working the front lines. According to the National Institutes of Health, "Nurses caring for patients infected with COVID-19 were found deeply troubled by burnout, showing insomnia, depression, somatization, symptoms, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Such psychological trauma even led to the suicide of some medical staff. 1500 nurses from 44 countries have died during the COVID-19 restrictions up to 28 Oct. 2020, according to the International Council of Nurses" (Ge et al. 2023). These 1500 nurses took their lives as a means of escaping the psychological trauma associated with COVID-19. That's a loss that we cannot put a price on. Burnout related to the pandemic has lead to a large number of nurses leaving this occupation and seeking out other job opportunities with less psychological stress.

Another large contributing factor to the nursing shortages we are experiencing is a lack of nurse educators. Students are not being deterred from nursing school due to a lack of entry requirements, it's simply because there aren't enough nurse educators to teach them. If there

aren't enough nurse educators, we cannot introduce new competent nurses into the working field.

One of the most important contributing factors to the nursing shortage is low wages and poor employment benefits. When you assess how a healthcare facility operates, most of the care on receives is from the nurse, not the physician. Yet, physicians still earn much higher wages than nurses. Many of the roles that a nurse holds in caring for patients are unable to be given a price in a monetary system, such as emotional support, yet they play a huge part in patient satisfaction and patient health outcomes. As inflation continues to rise and change the economy we live in, wages aren't being matched to what they should be. Lower wages may lead to a feeling of being taken advantage of, which also contributes to nurses leaving this occupation to seek other employment opportunities.

I am writing to you to seek help in improving nurses wages and benefits to help cultivate a community that desires to protect our current nurses and prevent the loses that have been occurring countrywide. Fewer nurses leads to higher patient ratios, which, in turn, leads to unsafe patient care. To protect our patients and our community, we need to protect our nurses as well. H.R. 5575 is a bill that was passed to increase the pay rates of certain nurses and Physicians Assistants of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I think that we need a bill similar to this to pass that increases generalized nurse wages in order to keep nurses in facilities and caring for patients. I think there also needs to be more advertisement on the need for nurse educators so that we can continue to push students eager to learn and care for others out into the community as nurses. Money and incentives are not everything, but they sure do help in keeping employees happy and healthy.

I encourage you to look into the facts behind nurse shortages and the H.R. 5575 bill to ensure that you understand just how detrimental losing nurses is on the economy and patient care and if there is a way to improve upon the wages that are paying out nurses. I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and I hope it leaves you pondering what can be done to help the nursing shortage crisis.

Sincerely,

Olivia Arthur
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