

Submitter: Sui Ping Cheung

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure: SB1549

My name is Sui Ping Cheung and I am an RN. I am writing because I completely oppose SB1549. SB1549 aims to cap the salary of healthcare workers is a major affront to the impossibly overwhelming and important work that all healthcare workers are doing in the pandemic of our lifetime. This is especially the case in the US with one of the most abysmal death tolls of all countries fighting this pandemic. My work as a nurse evolves to a ever more difficult trajectory with no end in sight. I take care of high patient loads with high acuity where the stress is relentless. As a nurse I am responsible for the entire holistic health of my patients. This translates to essentially being anything and everything to all patients at any given moment. This includes the spectrum of managing my patients and their families emotions, patiently answering their questions about their loved ones care. I am also part of their healthcare team that administers their medications safely, assisting them in their activities of daily living and assessing every step of their recovery process. On any given shift, I am monitoring their overall conditions which can include change in level of consciousness, blood pressure, temperature, oxygenation status, heart rate, changes in lab values that may be concerning, monitoring how much their eating, drinking and their elimination and urination patterns. This is on top of managing all the equipment that comes with keeping them stable which include managing and maintaining artificial airways, making sure all their supplemental oxygen equipment is in working order, managing all the access lines including IVs, ostomies, catheters, tube feeds just to name a few. Moreover, this is done not just for one pt, but for upwards of 7 patients or more. The bottom line is that people are unpredictable. But sick people fighting an acute battle back toward health are even more unpredictable and tenuous. To say that a nurse's job is highly dynamic could well qualify for the understatement of the century. A nurses job along with all healthcare workers that provide direct patient care is already stretched to the limits of the relentlessly impossible situation of navigating a pandemic with no end in sight. To put a salary cap on the value of healthcare workers in keeping patients alive while facilitating their recovery is a slap in the face of all healthcare workers. Our job never stops: we never stop doing, worrying or caring for our patients. Even when I come home, I am still thinking about my patients and mentally scanning over my shift to see if I missed anything important. Why should our salaries be capped, likely in favor to short change the value that all healthcare workers bring to their patients which can likely one day or even currently be one of your own loved ones?!?! Do not pass SB1549! If healthcare workers are truly some of the heroes in the drama of this pandemic, put your money where your mouth is and oppose SB1549!