

Submitter: Linda Murata Ray RN
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2792

RE: Support for HB 2792

To the House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards,

Before we talk about the unnecessary multimillions that Providence is probably spending on the preparation and coverage of a strike we need to mention why the strike occurs. Providence's RN wage scale is significantly lower than our competing hospitals (I say competing because let's call it what it is). Ex. New grad nurses that start at Providence are using lower paying hospitals (Providence) to get their experience. After gaining that experience these nurses leave for competing hospitals that are offering better working conditions and wages. This is partly what leads to the high turnover. This in turn leads to Providence having fewer nurses than needed to provide the safe and best care that their patients deserve. Because Providence continues to place profit before patients, nurses continue to leave. It's a vicious cycle (Hire, train, burnout, leave). Nurses are committed to their patients. But when they are pushed into a corner where they are unable to provide the best they are willing to strike for their patients and the nursing profession. This is just one reason for a strike but one very important demand because patients are affected. Some other requests solely affect the nurses.

We, the striking nurses, and the public don't know exactly how much money Providence spends on a strike. But we do know that during the current strike Providence is doubling the number of nurses on many of the units and probably paying each nurse twice as much of what a regular staff member gets paid. What that says to me is that in order to get and retain these commitments they are willing to pay the money and increase staffing. It also says that their regular staff doesn't deserve competitive wages and improved nurse/patient ratio but the replacement nurses do. That makes no sense at all. They are throwing away money and causing an unnecessary disruption to patient care. It's only right that their community and the general public know the cost and reason behind this strike. With this bill, the public can form their opinions accordingly. Without this bill, there is no true transparency.

Thank you for accepting my testimony and I look forward to your support.
Linda Murata Ray RN