

Submitter: Rebecca Roehm
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,

Strikes in healthcare settings are often contentious, with both hospital management and healthcare workers advocating for what they believe is best for patients, employees, and the institution as a whole. One critical but often overlooked aspect of these disputes is the financial cost of hiring replacement workers during a strike. Hospitals should be transparent about these costs for four key reasons: accountability, informed public discussion, fairness to non-striking employees, and trust-building.

1. Financial Accountability

Hospitals, particularly non-profit institutions and those receiving public funds, have a duty to be fiscally responsible. The cost of hiring temporary replacement workers—who often receive higher wages, travel stipends, and lodging—can be substantial. Public disclosure of these expenses ensures that hospital leadership remains accountable for their financial decisions, especially when they argue that they cannot afford to meet workers' demands for better wages and benefits.

2. Informed Public Discussion

Healthcare strikes impact not just hospital employees, but also patients and the broader community. When hospitals claim they cannot afford wage increases but then allocate significant sums to temporary replacements, the public deserves to know the full financial picture. Transparency would allow for a more informed debate about how hospital funds are being used and whether fair compromises could have been reached to prevent the strike in the first place.

3. Fairness to Non-Striking Employees

Strikes also affect employees who choose not to participate. These workers often experience increased workloads, additional stress, and sometimes resentment from both sides. If hospitals are spending large sums on temporary workers while denying wage increases or improved working conditions to their full-time staff, it raises serious concerns about fairness. Transparency in strike-related spending would allow non-striking employees to assess whether the hospital is making financial decisions that truly support their long-term well-being.

4. Rebuilding Trust and Good Faith Negotiations

Workplace disputes are difficult, but openness fosters trust. When hospitals refuse to disclose strike-related costs, it can create suspicion and deepen divides between hospital leadership, employees, and the public. By voluntarily publishing these figures, hospitals demonstrate a commitment to honest dialogue and fair dealing. This move could pave the way for more productive negotiations in the future, reducing the likelihood of prolonged strikes and disruptions in patient care.

Conclusion

Publishing strike-related spending isn't about taking sides—it's about transparency, accountability, and ensuring that financial decisions align with the best interests of patients, employees, and the community. If hospitals believe in their financial reasoning, they should have no issue sharing these numbers. At a time when trust in healthcare institutions is more important than ever, such transparency would be a meaningful step toward fairness and integrity in labor negotiations.

Thank you for accepting my testimony and I look forward to your support.

Rebecca Roehm