

February 7, 2022

The Illinois House Labor & Commerce Committee will hold a hearing Wednesday, Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. on [House Bill 2642](#), which would require hospitals to pay nurses a minimum of four hours at the nurses' regular rate of pay if they report to work and are sent home without working their full scheduled shift. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Fred Crespo, who is a strong proponent of mandatory nurse staffing ratios and was the only legislator to vote against the Nurse Staffing Improvement Act ([Senate Bill 2153](#)) that became law last year.

ACTIONS REQUESTED: Contact members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee and urge them to oppose and vote NO on House Bill 2642. To look up the members of the committee, their contact information, and the hospitals in their districts, [click here](#). (Note, not all members have hospitals.)

It is important to note that each week, if a bill is not acted upon, previously filed witness slips are removed from the record and not maintained. Please use the links below to file your opposition slip. Just as importantly, please contact your legislator directly to express your opposition to the bill.

Submit an electronic witness slip to the committee, opposing House Bill 2642, by [clicking here](#). When you fill out the form, be sure to mark the "Opponent" circle in Section III, and the "Record of Appearance Only" box in Section IV. This will indicate to the committee that you do not intend to provide oral or written testimony.

If you are a constituent of a committee member (i.e., you live or work in that member's district), you can send an email message to that member by [clicking here](#).

Suggested Talking Points

- I urge you to oppose and vote NO on House Bill 2642.
- This bill would require hospitals to pay nurses "reporting time" pay—a minimum of 4 hours regular pay when they report to work and then are sent home without working at least half of their usual scheduled day's work.
- As the COVID-19 surge continues and record numbers of COVID-19 patients continue to be admitted to Illinois hospitals, hospitals and fatigued healthcare workers are working hard to provide the best care to all patients who need critical medical attention.
- Together with their staff, Illinois hospitals continue to do everything in their power to manage hospital capacity and resources, including our most important resource, health care providers and nurses.
- In order to manage in this environment, hospitals require the tools and flexibility to manage operations under extraordinarily challenging conditions.
- Hospitals constantly monitor and assess the specific and unique care needs of each patient and determine and adjust the staff needed to care for patients (adding or reducing staff as needed in real time), based on the patients' needs and the number of patients in every unit (i.e., nurse staffing by patient acuity).
- Hospitals must be fiscally prudent and good stewards of our limited healthcare resources (staff and financial resources).
- Hospitals make every attempt to adjust staffing proactively to minimize any disruptions to our most valued asset: our employees.
- At some hospitals, nurses place their name on "on-call" or "call-off" lists. These are individuals who are scheduled to work

but are requesting to either be placed “on call” or have the day off if census warrants.

- Nurses also have the opportunity to voluntarily pick up additional shifts (mandatory nurse overtime is prohibited in Illinois), sometimes including overtime and/or incentive pay that counterbalance the need at times to reduce staffing because of low patient census.
- This bill is flawed in many ways, making it impossible to implement. For example:
- It sets no time frame for when a notification to a nurse directing her/him not to report to work for a scheduled shift that would require “reporting pay.”
 - Is it only the day of, or would it also cover cancellations of shifts where notice is given the day before? Would it apply to a situation where a shift is cancelled with notice given at any time during the scheduled work period?
- HB 2642 does not recognize that hospitals already use various practices designed to address low patient census situations that are not foreseeable or predictable. A hospital may have in place practices to allow for volunteers to leave early or existing forms of show-up payments.
- This bill would even require hospitals to pay nurses when they are sent home for either disciplinary or impairment reasons.
- This bill would create another unfunded mandate on hospitals by financially penalizing them for most effectively and safely managing to meet patients’ needs—which changes from hour to hour and shift to shift—to their available human resources.
- The financial burden of this bill also comes at a time when hospitals and healthcare systems are facing tremendous economic stress from the impact of COVID-19.
- Please oppose and vote NO on House Bill 2642.

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