



District 4

Del Vitale
District Director
David M. Wasiura
Assistant to the Director

April 24, 2023

President of the Senate Nicholas Scutari
125 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Minority Leader Steven Oroho
125 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Speaker of the Assembly Craig Coughlin
125 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Minority Leader John DiMaio
125 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: United Steelworkers supports New Jersey A. 4536 and S. 304.

Dear President of the Senate Scutari, Minority Leader Oroho, Speaker of the Assembly Coughlin, and Minority Leader DiMaio:

On behalf of the members and health care workers of the United Steelworkers Union (USW) in New Jersey, I write to you in support of A. 4536 and S. 304. Our union is the largest industrial union in North America, representing workers in steel, aluminum, and other metals; paper; rubber; glass; cement; chemicals; refining; other industrial sectors; and the service sector. We also represent approximately 50,000 healthcare workers across the United States, including at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick and Somerset.

A. 4536 and S. 304, introduced by Assemblymember Angelica Jimenez (District 32) and by Senator Joe Vitale (District 19), respectively, would establish minimum staffing standards for registered professional nurses in hospitals, ambulatory surgery facilities, and certain DHS facilities. This bill would require one RN for every four patients in an emergency department, one for every two patients in intensive care, and one for every five patients in a medical/surgical unit. Additionally, it would give nurses' the collective power to vote to approve or disprove a staffing plan, and builds in flexibility by allowing policies and procedures for staff reassignment, including floating staff.

Our union has long been an advocate for safe staffing policies in health care settings, not just for registered nurses, but for all health care job classes. In addition to representing registered nurses, our members also work as physicians, ancillary staff, EMTs, pharmacists,

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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and more. All health care professionals are caregivers, and each one plays an important role in delivering quality patient care. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that from

2019 to 2021, the health care industry consistently had the highest number of worker injury cases compared to any other sector.¹ Health care workers cite short staffing as a detriment to patient care and work satisfaction, and as a contributing factor to injury on-the-job. These caregivers should have every advantage possible to ensure their safe return from work every day.

We are optimistic that this legislation will start to make a positive impact on injury rates for registered nurses in New Jersey, and that more legislation will follow for increased safety for other health care occupations. USW looks forward to working with the legislature toward our shared goal of achieving a safe workplace for all workers, especially for those taking care of others in their most vulnerable moments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Del Vitale".

Del Vitale, Director
United Steelworkers, District 4

CC: Representative Jimenez
Representative Conaway, Health Committee Chair
Representative Egan, Labor Committee Chair
Senator Vitale, Health, Human Services, and Senior Citizens Committee Chair
Senator Madden, Labor Committee Chair

¹ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), "Economic News Release: Table 3. Number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses by selected industry and case types, private industry, 2019-21 (thousands)", April 6, 2023.