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PATIENT SAFETY ACT REACHES MAJORITY SUPPORT IN STATE HOUSE; NURSES DEMAND ACTION FROM HEALTH COMMITTEE CHAIR REP. KATHY RAPP

Harrisburg, PA- This morning, nurses from SEIU Healthcare PA, Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP), the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association (PSNA), and Nurses of Pennsylvania held a press conference in the Ryan Office Building Lobby at the State Capitol demanding a vote from PA House Health Committee Chair Rep. Kathy Rapp on the **Patient Safety Act (HB 106)**, legislation designed to set safe staffing standards for nurses in our state. The Patient Safety Act reached the rare legislative milestone of garnering a majority of Representatives as co-sponsors earlier this month.

Nurses have faced shrinking staffing levels for years, but COVID-19 has turned a crisis into a catastrophe that is putting both nurses' and patients' lives at risk. Nurses are fleeing their jobs due to staffing conditions and unreasonable patient assignments. Many nurses are leaving the profession altogether.

"A majority of the House wants to address this crisis and guarantee safe staffing standards with the Patient Safety Act. This bill would stop the unsafe staffing that is burning nurses out and driving them away from the bedside," said **Debbie Vandover, an ICU nurse in Southcentral PA.**

Despite the bipartisan and majority support for the Patient Safety Act, [Rep. Rapp said at a Republican Policy Committee hearing recently](#) that she has not heard a "real grievance" from nurses and that passing this legislation that would protect nurses and patients from unsafe staffing would be "very irresponsible." She further went on to say it would not receive a vote as long as it is in her committee. Rep. Rapp's comments have sparked outrage from nurses online and from speakers at today's press conference.

“Nurses were left confused and angered by Chairwoman Rapp’s comments last week that she hadn’t heard any “real grievances” from nurses. Her statement, in fact, disrespects nurses’ tireless work and repeated calls to action. We are here today to make sure that Chairwoman Rapp hears us loud and clear: staffing conditions in Pennsylvania’s hospitals are dangerous and must be addressed by passing the Patient Safety Act. Patients’ lives depend on this legislation,” said **Betsy Snook MEd, BSN, RN, Chief Executive Officer of the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association.**

“There is a massive staffing crisis in our hospitals right now – one that illustrates how desperately we need the Patient Safety Act to ensure patients in Pennsylvania receive excellent care and to encourage nurses to return to the bedside. Rep. Rapp says she believes putting forward the bill would be “irresponsible”. We strongly disagree. In the face of a crisis, it would be irresponsible – even dangerous – not to act,” said **Maureen May, RN, President of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP).**

Research has repeatedly shown that lower nurse-to-patient ratios protect patients. For every patient added over four patients per nurse, the risk of a patient dying increases by 7%. Lower patient-to-nurse staffing ratios have also been associated with significantly lower rates of hospital mortality, failure to rescue, cardiac arrest, hospital-acquired pneumonia, respiratory failure, patient falls, and pressure ulcers.

“Safe staffing isn’t a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It’s an issue that matters to every single person in Pennsylvania. Rep. Rapp: if you value the nurses and healthcare workers that have seen us through this pandemic, you will listen to us now and move this bill to a vote. Don’t stand between us and the care our patients need,” said **Allison Fraser, a Pediatric ED nurse at Hershey Medical Center.**

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The Patient Safety Act is supported by the organizations [Nurses of Pennsylvania](#), Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals ([PASNAP](#)), Pennsylvania State Nurses Association ([PSNA](#)), and [SEIU Healthcare PA](#).