



MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

A.8580 (Gunther)

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to enacting the "safe staffing for quality care act".

The Capital Region Chamber, representing 2,800 businesses and organizations from throughout the Capital Region that employ more than 150,000 area residents, strongly opposes A.8580, which would mandate a hugely expensive and medically unnecessary nursing staff ratio on hospitals and nursing homes throughout the state. The impositions of these ratios, which are not supported by most studies or embraced by 49 states, would cause a ripple effect of higher costs and greater shortages of nursing care, not the least of which is an increased cost to the health care system by between \$2 and \$3 billion annually.

The sponsor's justification for this bill states that the ratios specified in the bill are based on peer-reviewed academic research and evidence-based recommendations and the experiences of the state of California. California is the only state to have experimented with statewide hospital ratios and the latest peer-reviewed studies on California's experience find no direct link between the mandated staffing ratios and improved patient outcomes.

Several studies have identified far more effective methods to improve quality outcomes in hospitals and nursing homes. These include the implementation of evidence-based practices to standardize care, the education and preparation of nurses and improved communications by health care teams. Patient outcomes are improved through better attention to individual patient care. Since every patient is different, the needs of every hospital and nursing home are different; removing staffing flexibility from diverse providers will not result in better care.

This bill would require the hiring of more than 20,000 new nurses in hospitals alone. With a limited number of nurses, under the mandates of this bill, New York would experience severe nursing shortages in some hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient and ambulatory care facilities, undermining all reform efforts to shift care delivery and shift services from the inpatient to outpatient and community settings. This bill represents an enormous unfunded health care mandate, which does nothing to improve patient care while driving already profoundly high health care costs remarkably higher.

For these stated reasons, the Capital Region Chamber opposes this legislation.