



CALIFORNIA ADVOCATES FOR NURSING HOME REFORM

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March 15, 2023

The Honorable Dave Cortese
Chair, Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
1021 N Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 525 (Durazo) \$25 Minimum Wage for Health Care Workers – Support

Dear Honorable Cortese:

On behalf of California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR), I am writing in proud of support SB 525 (Durazo): \$25 Minimum Wage for Health Care Workers.

For three years, healthcare workers have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers have risked their lives, the lives of their loved ones, and in some cases paid the ultimate price in their service to their community. The psychological toll of working through the pandemic, compounded by inadequate staffing and pressure to work overtime, has caused many healthcare workers to reach a breaking point.

California is facing a healthcare workforce crisis. Even before the pandemic, California was facing a shortage of 500,000 healthcare workers to care for our aging population.¹ Now, after facing the trauma and dangerous working conditions of the pandemic, many are struggling with low pay and poor working conditions. According to a recent report 31% of healthcare workers are considering leaving the profession altogether.² California cannot deliver on its goals of universal quality care if we do not have a sufficient healthcare workforce.

The stress and toll of fighting the pandemic has created a full-blown healthcare staffing and patient care crisis. When facilities are short staffed, patients are forced to wait unsafe lengths of time for care — are sometimes denied care altogether — and workers are put under unnecessary strain. Every individual who walks through the doors of their hospital, clinic, or other healthcare facility deserves the highest quality of care.

Quality patient care requires strong staffing levels. SB 525 (Durazo) will bolster efforts to fill the huge shortage of healthcare workers our state is facing by ensuring that health care workers are fairly compensated. By setting a \$25/hour minimum wage we can attract the workers we need to ensure we do not see a decline in quality of care for communities across California.

¹ <https://www.mercer.us/content/dam/mercer/assets/content-images/north-america/united-states/us-healthcare-news/us-2021-healthcare-labor-market-whitepaper.pdf>

² <https://morningconsult.com/2021/10/04/health-care-workers-series-part-2-workforce/CCSWG-California-Blueprint-for-Women's-Pandemic-Economic-Recovery.pdf>

I respectfully ask that you vote “Aye” on SB 525 (Durazo) when it comes before you as a way to recognize the outstanding efforts and sacrifices our health care workers have made and to ensure we do not add to the staffing shortage and compromise patient safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia L. McGinnis".

Patricia L. McGinnis

Executive Director

CC: Members of the XXX Committee

Senator Durazo