

Bill Number: S. 1709

Bill Sponsor: Sen. Padilla, Alex [D-CA] introduced 5/12/2025

Title of Bill: Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patient Safety and Quality Care Act of 2025

Current Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1709>

Status: 5/12/2025 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Summary: To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes.

P&A Committee Insights:

Establishes Staffing Ratios: Ensures safer nurse-to-patient ratios, improving working conditions and patient safety for Hispanic nurses and communities.

- Improves Outcomes & Equity: Safe staffing reduces medical errors and disparities, supporting NAHN's mission of equitable care.
- Prevents Exploitation: Prohibits mandatory overtime and supports retention, especially relevant in high-need hospitals serving Hispanic populations.
- Transparency & Accountability: Requires public posting of ratios and audits, empowering nurses and patients.
- Protects Whistleblowers: Nurses can report unsafe conditions without fear.
- Floating Allowed but Regulated: Nurses may be floated, but staffing ratios must still be maintained.

Concerns:

- Rural & Safety-Net Hospitals at Risk: These facilities may struggle to meet ratio requirements, potentially impacting care access for Hispanic communities.
- RN Workforce Supply: Implementation depends on having enough RNs; federal investment in education and diverse recruitment must match demand.

Language Use:

- Clearly defines "direct-care registered nurse."
- Appropriately differentiates RNs from LPNs and non-clinical staff — supports clarity and enforcement.

- While ratios limit assignment size, hospitals may still float nurses. The bill does not prevent floating, but ensures that wherever you float, ratios must still be respected.

Reviewers' Comments: "As a CICU nurse, I recognize the importance of safe staffing ratios. My unit is generally well-staffed, but because of that, I am often floated to cover short-staffed units. While I understand the need to equalize staffing, floating disrupts patient continuity and places nurses in unfamiliar environments. This bill takes a crucial step forward by mandating safe nurse-to-patient ratios across all units, which helps ensure that, whether I am in the CICU or floated to another floor, patient safety and nurse well-being are protected."

Position: Support

Priority: High

Subject: Nursing Workforce