



January 26, 2021

Dear Representative Stafman and House Human Services Committee:

Support of HR 1 - RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA EXPRESSING APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND SUPPORT STAFF FOR THEIR EFFORTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

My name is Vicky Byrd, MSN, RN. I am a Montana Registered Nurse of 32 years and the CEO of the Montana Nurses Association (MNA). MNA is the recognized leader and advocate for the professional nurse in Montana. MNA promotes professional development, nursing practice, standards, and education; represents professional nurses; and provides nursing leadership in promoting high quality healthcare, safety, and overall public health.

MNA thanks Representative Stafman for bringing forward a resolution lifting up nurses and all healthcare workers during one of the most difficult times in our public health history.

2020 was designated as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife by the World Health Organization in recognition of the contributions they make, and the risks associated with nursing shortages in Dec of 2019, certainly not foreseeing that for the year of 2020, that could not have been truer.

For perspective, back in November of 2020 reports from the International Council of Nurses stated that at least 1,500 nurses across the globe have died from the coronavirus, even though the figure is almost certainly underestimated due to the lack of data. However, even that figure brings to light that, as many nurses who have died during this Covid pandemic by November, is as many nurses that had died during World War I. This same council continues to look at additional data that suggests more than 20,000 health care workers have died worldwide. These figures are quite sobering.

Nurses and healthcare workers are extremely resilient and nurses comprise the largest group of healthcare professionals in the U.S., furthermore, they continue to be the most trusted profession. Nurses are with patients 24/7 and from the beginning of life to the end, practice in all healthcare settings and are filling new roles to meet the ever-growing demand for health and health care services. Nurses appreciate the support and value this resolution it brings to them and all healthcare professionals.

Thank you again Representative Stafman for sponsoring a resolution to lift up one of our most valuable healthcare resources, the healthcare worker.

Please vote a do pass on HR 1.

Vicky Byrd, MSN, RN CEO