



MINNESOTA NURSES ASSOCIATION
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April 10, 2025

Senate Labor Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair McEwen and Members of the Senate Labor Committee,

With over 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading advocate for bedside nurses in Minnesota, representing roughly 80 percent of the state's active hospital nursing workforce. We are dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of nurses and healthcare workers through collective action, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and strong labor protections that benefit both our members and the patients they serve.

On behalf of my members, I am writing to express our **strong support** for SF2373, the Senate Labor Committee budget bill, and specifically the new provisions in Article 3 – Break Laws. We urge you to support legislation that guarantees nurses and healthcare workers the most basic of rights: legally protected 15-minute rest breaks and 30-minute meal breaks, with state agency enforcement and real penalties for employers who fail to comply.

Nurses and all healthcare workers care for you, your friends, family and community, often under intense pressure, with too few resources, and not enough time. It is not uncommon for a healthcare worker to experience dehydration, cognitive impairment, kidney problems, urinary tract infections and more from the lack of breaks. Right now, caregivers across Minnesota are working 8, 10, 12-hour shifts without stopping to eat, drink, sit down, or use the restroom. We are expected to care for others while ignoring our own needs. That is unsustainable, unsafe, and unacceptable.

Nurses and healthcare workers have tried to address this at the bargaining table and have been rebuffed. When they try to file complaints with state agencies, the broad definitions and lack of enforcement in statute allows employers to keep pushing them to the brink. Could you work for 12 straight hours without a sip of water?

When nurses and healthcare workers aren't allowed to take a break, patients suffer. Mistakes happen. Judgment slips. Burnout grows. The health of the caregiver directly impacts the care we give. We cannot continue pouring from an empty cup.

This legislation gives nurses the legal protection we need to pause, refuel, and return to our patients with the energy, clarity, and compassion they deserve, and it sends a powerful message: **Minnesota values the people who do this essential work.**

We are not machines. We are human beings. And it's time the law recognized that.

Please support this critical legislation—for all healthcare workers, for patients, and for the future of safe, sustainable care in Minnesota. Please support SF2373.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Rubesch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Chris" on the left and "Rubesch" on the right, connected by a horizontal line.

Chris Rubesch, RN
President, Minnesota Nurses Association