



**Testimony of
John Brady, RN
AFTCT Executive Vice President**

**Public Health Committee
March 17, 2021**

SB 1 An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to The Pandemic

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is John Brady, I am a Registered Nurse and Executive Vice President for AFT

Connecticut, a union of 30,000 members in Healthcare, Education, and Public Service. We are the largest union of Registered Nurses in Connecticut and represent members from almost every healthcare profession. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of *SB 1 An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care In Response To The Pandemic*.

AFT Connecticut supports SB. 1 and would offer some thoughts and suggestions on just a few of the sections.

We agree with the objective of Section 1 as we understand it. The reasons that students withdraw from school should be identified when possible and resources should be provided to that student. However, we must recognize that some students who leave school before graduation do not withdraw, but simply stop attending classes. It will be difficult to collect data on these students. We also feel that resources to evaluate students during their academic careers and address issues in real time, is very valuable.

Section 4 and 5 concern a study by the Department of Public Health on the Connecticut's Covid-19 response and preparations for future pandemics. We agree that it is critical to fully understand this and be better prepared for the next pandemic.

Section 6 and 7 recognize racism as a public health crisis and addresses it. This pandemic has made it even more clear that this is true, and we support this as the policy of the State of Connecticut and these efforts to address it.

Section 8 addresses staffing in ICUs. We support a ratio of two patients to one nurse in ICU. We would suggest that this be listed as the minimum ratio required, with the ICU nurse able to reduce that ratio to 1:1 based on acuity of the patients. The initiating of patient nurse ratios should not be offset by a decrease in non-nursing staff. We would also suggest that there would be enforcement mechanisms, including fines, if hospitals violated this section.

Section 18 deals with Community Needs Assessments and steps to make them more responsive to the communities that hospitals serve, and we support this effort.

We thank the senators who have proposed this legislation and commend them on their commitment to Connecticut's children, patients, and caregivers. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for all you do for the residents of Connecticut.