



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony
Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care
June 25, 2025
Assembly Bill 294

Chairman Moses and members of the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care – Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on AB 294, relating to membership on the Board of Nursing.

Assembly Bill 294 revises the membership of the Board of Nursing to replace two licensed registered nurses with an advanced practice nurse prescriber (APNP) and a nurse educator. The bill provides that the two members of the Board of Nursing who were appointed as licensed registered nurses whose terms expire the earliest following the effective date of the bill must be replaced by an APNP and a nurse educator after their terms expire.

With Wisconsin facing nursing shortages, especially in rural areas, a nurse educator and APNP can provide valuable perspectives to the board on recruitment, retention, and training strategies to build a robust nursing workforce. This will ensure Wisconsin stays ahead of these trends by shaping policies that reflect emerging practice models and prepare the workforce for the future of care delivery.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this legislation and would gladly answer any questions the committee may have.



RACHAEL A. CABRAL-GUEVARA

STATE SENATOR • 19TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care

Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara

June 25, 2025

Hello, members of the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 294, a bill that would ensure the Board of Nursing has a well-rounded perspective on nursing education and a growing role within nursing, Advanced Practice Registered Nursing.

Requiring both a nurse educator and an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN, currently classified as an Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber under statute) to serve on the Wisconsin Board of Nursing (BON) would provide a well-rounded approach to nursing regulation, combining educational experience with advanced clinical practice to better serve the state's healthcare needs.

Nurse educators bring specialized knowledge in curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and student assessment. Their presence ensures that nursing education programs align with current clinical practices and educational standards, fostering a well-prepared nursing workforce.

APRNs, including nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists, possess advanced clinical training and often serve as primary care providers. Their inclusion offers the board firsthand insights into advanced nursing practices, patient care complexities, and the evolving healthcare landscape.

With Wisconsin facing nursing shortages, especially in rural areas, a nurse educator and APRN can provide valuable perspectives to the Board of Nursing on recruitment, retention, and training strategies to build a robust nursing workforce.

As healthcare rapidly evolves—with shifts toward telehealth, team-based care, and increasingly complex patient needs—the roles and responsibilities of nurses are also changing. Having a nurse educator and APRN on the BON ensures Wisconsin stays ahead of these trends by shaping policies that reflect emerging practice models and prepare the workforce for the future of care delivery.

I am hopeful you will support this important bill right-sizing representation on the Board of Nursing.

Testimony on AB 294/ SB 282 – June 25, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Moses and members of the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging & Long-term Care, for allowing me to speak to you today. My name is Mary Beck Metzger, and I have been a Wisconsin RN for 46 years, and a Family Nurse Practitioner for 25 years.

The Wisconsin Board of Nursing is the regulatory body for the state's nurses and nursing schools. The Wisconsin 2024 RN Workforce Survey notes that there are 93,008 Registered Nurses and of that, 9,127 or 9.8 percent are Advanced Practice Nurses. There are 4,600 licensed practical nurses.

There are at least 45 approved in-state schools of nursing awarding Associate Degrees, Bachelor of Science degrees, Masters, PhD, and Doctorate of Nursing Practice degrees, graduating about 3000 students per year. 1200 nurse faculty teach in Wisconsin schools.

AB 294 changes the make-up of the membership of the Wisconsin BON. Currently the Board is made up of five RNs, two LPNs, and two public members. AB 294 would designate two of the RN seats: one for an APNP, and another for a Nurse Educator.

It is critically important for an Advanced Practice Nurse to be seated on the BON. An APNP has an inside view of the education, training, experience, and varied clinical practices of APNPs, and can provide expert insight on regulations and policies that directly impact their practices and the patients they provide care for. An APNP on the BON can ensure that the Board understands the APNP standards of care, prioritizing patient safety and optimal outcomes of care. As the BON regulates nursing educational programs in Wisconsin, it is vital that an individual who is a graduate of an APN program be able to provide insights on the graduate school curriculum and process. An APNP on the BON offers a unique perspective, collaborating with other Board members to ensure that regulatory decisions are comprehensive, current, and equitable, ultimately protecting the public while advancing the nursing profession. In addition, APNP representation will support the use of evidence-based, patient-centered care and can guide discussions on expanding access to care through full practice authority and other reforms—especially in rural and underserved areas.

It is equally important that a seat on the BON be reserved for a Nurse Educator. Nurse Educators hold expertise in curriculum development and instruction, a constantly changing landscape with numerous evolving technologies. They teach needed skills, foster academic discussion, and appropriately assess students' progress, helping to ethically train the next generation of nurses and advanced practice nurses. Nurse Educators guide students to design and implement innovations and quality-improvements in clinical settings. Nurse Educators are pivotal in setting and ensuring high educational standards, careful program evaluation and regulation, helping align academic preparation with licensure requirements and workforce demands. In Wisconsin, which is facing a nursing and nurse faculty shortage we must be intentional about placing importance on valuing and promoting Nurse Educators who reinforce a preventive approach to public protection starting at the educational level.

Thank you for allowing me to share my support for AB 294. I want to thank Representative Sortwell for sponsoring AB 294 and Representatives Dittrich and Gundrum as co-sponsors. We ask that AB 294 be passed out of committee as soon as possible. I will gladly answer any questions.

Mary Beck Metzger, DNP, FNP-BC, APNP

Family Nurse Practitioner, Rock River Community Clinics- Watertown & Whitewater

Wisconsin Nurses Association

June 25, 2025

Representative Clint Moses, Chair
Assembly Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Committee
Room 12 West
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

RE: Support of Assembly Bill 294 and Senate Bill 282 membership on the Board of Nursing

Dear Chairperson Moses and Members of the Assembly Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Committee:
Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 294 and its companion, Senate Bill 282, which proposes to formally identify specific types of registered nurses as designated members of the Wisconsin Board of Nursing.

My name is Christopher Wojnar. I am a native Wisconsinite, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, and a nationally board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. I appear before you today on behalf of the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA)—our state's professional organization representing registered nurses across all specialties, settings, and regions. Membership in WNA is open to any Wisconsin RN, and our mission includes the advancement of nursing practice, professional standards, and public health.

Designated Seat for an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

WNA strongly supports the inclusion of a designated seat for an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) on the Board of Nursing. This designation would ensure that advanced clinical expertise is directly represented in regulatory decisions that affect modern nursing practice, licensure, and patient care in our state.

APRNs—including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives—provide vital healthcare services throughout Wisconsin. We are frequently primary care providers, mental health specialists, anesthesia providers, and maternal care clinicians. In rural and underserved areas especially, APRNs are often the only accessible healthcare professionals available to patients.

Having an APRN on the Board ensures that someone with direct clinical insight into advanced nursing practice can help craft regulations related to licensure, continuing education, collaborative agreements, and prescriptive authority. An APRN board member would offer critical perspectives on

the practical impact of regulations, especially as they relate to workforce sustainability and scope-of-practice modernization.

Importantly, Wisconsin would not be the first state to recognize this need. Louisiana, Tennessee, North Dakota, and Kentucky all have statutory mandates requiring at least one APRN to serve on their Board of Nursing. These mandates generally stipulate that the APRN must be actively practicing and licensed in the state. There is a growing national trend to include advanced practice nurses in nursing regulatory bodies, aligning board composition with the evolving demands and complexity of modern healthcare delivery.

WNA supports the continued gubernatorial appointment of board members and believes this legislation wisely preserves that authority. At the same time, we urge that any APRN selected for this seat be someone who is actively engaged in direct patient care—those with “boots on the ground” knowledge who can speak to the lived realities of modern clinical practice.

Designated Seat for a Nurse Educator

WNA also strongly supports the establishment of a designated seat for a nurse educator. Nurse educators are critical to the future of Wisconsin’s nursing workforce. They bring expertise in curriculum development, accreditation standards, clinical competency requirements, and educational innovations aligned with national trends and state-specific health needs.

A nurse educator’s voice on the Board of Nursing ensures that decisions about program approvals, education regulations, and clinical training requirements are informed by the realities of academic practice. Educators are the bridge between regulation and the classroom, translating policy into workforce preparedness. Their contributions are especially relevant as Wisconsin addresses the ongoing nursing faculty shortage, high turnover in clinical education roles, and the need to expand nursing school capacity to meet future demand.

As of 2016, Wisconsin had an estimated 825 nurse educators, and that number continues to grow thanks to state-supported initiatives such as the Wisconsin Nurse Educator Program, which has already funded over 130 new educators and is expanding further. The Board of Nursing plays a direct role in approving, monitoring, and evaluating pre-licensure and graduate-level nursing programs. Including a nurse educator ensures that academic rigor and workforce alignment are kept at the forefront of every decision made by the Board.

This designated seat will elevate the educational standards that support public safety and help ensure that the next generation of nurses is not only clinically competent but also prepared to meet the changing healthcare needs of our state.

Final Thoughts

It is important to note that Assembly Bill 294 does not increase the size of the Board of Nursing. It simply ensures that two of the five designated registered nurse seats are explicitly reserved for an

APRN and a nurse educator—two essential roles in Wisconsin’s nursing landscape that are currently underrepresented in our regulatory structures.

WNA believes that these additions will bring the Board of Nursing into better alignment with 21st-century nursing practice and education. This legislation offers a common-sense, no-cost solution to strengthen the integrity of our nursing regulation while supporting public health, workforce stability, and patient safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to share WNA’s position on this important legislation. We especially thank Representative Sortwell for authoring this bill and Representatives Dittrich and Gundrum for their co-sponsorship. We respectfully urge this committee to support AB 294 and advance it out of committee without delay.

I welcome any questions and would be honored to contribute further if needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wojnar', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Christopher Wojnar, MSN, APNP, PMHNP-BC
Board of Directors, Wisconsin Nurses Association



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TO: Chairman Moses and Members of the Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care
DATE: June 25, 2025
RE: Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 294

Good morning, Chair Moses and members of the Assembly committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 294 (AB-294), regarding membership on the Board of Nursing.

My name is Jenna Palzkill and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) and Past President of the Wisconsin Association of Nurse Anesthetists (WIANA).

WIANA supports AB 294, which updates the membership of the Board of Nursing to better reflect today's nursing landscape. Including an advanced practice nurse prescriber and a nurse educator ensures the Board includes voices from both advanced clinical practice and nursing education.

Nurses working in advanced roles are on the front lines of care delivery. CRNAs, for example, provide anesthesia care in a variety of settings including hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, obstetrics, and the military. We are highly trained professionals with deep clinical experience. Representation on the Board matters—it means these perspectives are present when decisions are made that shape how nursing is practiced and regulated in Wisconsin.

This legislation recognizes the value of that expertise and supports a more balanced and informed Board. WIANA believes that adding advanced practice and educational representation will strengthen the Board's ability to make decisions that serve both patients and the nursing profession as a whole.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this important measure to support nurses and the patients they serve.