



Bringing Additional Nurses to the Fight Act

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has exacerbated existing shortages in our healthcare workforce. To better prepare for the next wave of the disease and future epidemics, it is imperative that we have the healthcare workforce needed to respond.

The Problem

The United States is experiencing a shortage of nurses, with The Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting an additional 203,700 hired each year through 2026 to fill available positions. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made this situation worse. Nurses across the country have had to work longer hours, often at high risk for contracting the disease themselves due to insufficient supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE). Some states even resorted to enlisting retired nurses to help with the response, despite their increased health risk.

The Solution

To prepare for further COVID-19 resurgences in the fall and winter, as well as any future pandemics, we must act to bolster our workforce now. Across the nation, there is an untapped workforce with the knowledge needed to enroll in accelerated programs to receive the training and skills needed to respond.

Institutions of Higher Education across the country should be empowered to scale up or establish Accelerated Option programs for their nursing programs, enabling them to train and certify additional nurses within 12-14 months.

Bringing Additional Nurses to the Fight Act

The *Bringing Additional Nurses to the Fight Act* provides Institutions of Higher Education with the funding needed to create or expand Accelerated Option programs to provide those with prior background or coursework in medical fields with a 12 to 14-month path to a nursing credential.

This bill allows students who have taken prior coursework in nursing-related fields to be eligible, as well as any physician trained in a foreign institute of higher education to apply.

Specifically, the legislation would do the following:

- Amend Section 831 of the Public Health Service Act to increase access to accelerated postgraduate nursing programs;
- Appropriate \$30 million for each fiscal year 2020 through 2023. This would allow approximately half of the nation's nursing programs to establish or expand this Accelerated Option credential;
- Individuals eligible include any who have earned prior credits pursuing a course of study in a nursing-related field, either in the US or a foreign institute of higher education.