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# Assembly California Legislature

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**SEBASTIAN RIDLEY-THOMAS**  
CHAIR: ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS AND REDISTRICTING  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

May 12, 2015

The Honorable Pedro Nava, Chair  
The Little Hoover Commission  
925 L Street, Suite 805  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Nava:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Little Hoover Commission examine the use of mandatory overtime for nurses employed by the state of California.

The use of mandatory overtime is banned for all nurses in California – except for nurses in the public sector. As nurses are often forced to work 12 to 16 hour shifts due mandatory overtime, the safety of hospital staff and other patients is put in danger. Prolonged work hours cause nurses to suffer from chronic fatigue and stress, which increases the risk for accidents and injuries. These hazardous conditions also severely disrupt the state's ability to provide the appropriate level of care and treatment, which patients in state facilities so desperately need.

The continued practice of mandatory overtime places the state in the position of undoing its hard work in the training, recruitment, and retention of public sector nurses by fostering a dangerous and unwelcoming work environment. The elimination of mandatory overtime would not only improve patient outcomes and workplace safety, it would also save the state money by decreasing staffing costs.

In 2012, the State Controller's Office payroll data reports showed that California spent \$66.7 million in overtime for nurses, amounting to 16 percent of total payroll for that year. Of the \$66.7 million paid in overtime, an estimated \$8.5 million was due to mandatory overtime. A total of 150 nursing staff could be hired using the \$8.5 million expenditure on mandatory overtime, including 92 registered nurses, 50 licensed vocational nurses, and 8 certified nursing assistants.

By examining this issue, the Commission can help to facilitate a dialogue that will improve efficiencies and working conditions for nurses while enhancing patient outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. M. Ridley-Thomas".

**SEBASTIAN RIDLEY-THOMAS**  
California Assemblyman  
Fifty-fourth District