

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 1

SUPPORT FOR NURSES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND FREE SPEECH RIGHTS

WHEREAS, recent and continuing legislative actions in several states and in Congress that seek to remove and/or significantly limit the collective bargaining and free speech rights of public employees, including registered nurses, appears to be developing into a national trend, and

WHEREAS, in some instances, these actions have circumvented normal legislative and democratic processes, and

WHEREAS, Registered Nurses bargain not only for wages, but as importantly, for improvements that address both patient safety and workplace safety, and

WHEREAS, the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses (2001) calls on the nursing profession to promote the health, welfare and safety of all people and to maintain a health care environment and employment conditions that are conducive to the provision of quality health care, and

WHEREAS, support for nurses' rights to advocate through individual or collective action for improved working conditions and optimal patient care is consistent with the values of the profession, and

WHEREAS, turning back the clock on established workplace rights will not solve the budget crisis faced by many states, and

WHEREAS, WSNA is very concerned that this erosion of a balanced system of rights and obligations will impact the current and future rights of nurses – as health care professionals and employees – to advocate on behalf of their patients, families, communities, as well as themselves, and

WHEREAS, WSNA is concerned about political actions taken to address state budgets that weaken the ability of all registered nurses, including publicly employed registered nurses, to freely advocate for the best work environment to deliver safe, quality nursing care services,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED That the 2011 WSNA General Assembly requests that the WSNA Board of Directors and Staff take the following actions:

1. The WSNA Board of Directors issue a position statement consistent with WSNA's long history of advocating on behalf of the economic and general welfare of nurses to support nurses' right to advocate for workplace conditions that foster safe, quality care for patients,
2. Support nurses in other states in protecting their rights to bargain and advocate for workplace conditions,
3. Educate WSNA members and the public about the impact to patient and nurse safety as it relates to the nurses' ability to bargain for working conditions, and
4. Work with other unions and coalition partners to protect nurses' rights to bargain and advocate for safe, quality working conditions.

ADOPTED: General Assembly 4/28/11