

# From the Bedside to the Capitol: Nurses Leading Legislative Advocacy



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## Background

- With the dynamic and constant changes to the healthcare landscape, it is vitally important for nurses to engage in legislative affairs.
- As the largest sector of healthcare workers, and the most trusted profession year-over-year, communities need nurses to represent their best interests through public policy.
- The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics describes engagement in policy as an ethical imperative for our profession.
- Currently in the US, only three nurses serve in the House of Representatives (<1%), and never in US history has a nurse served in the Senate.



## Literature Review

- A systematic review revealed three categories of barriers which affect nurses' engagement in legislative advocacy: personal, organizational, and professional.
  - High stress work environments and long hours can leave nurses physically and emotionally drained, reducing their availability and energy for advocacy.
  - Nurses may lack confidence and skills to navigate the challenges of policy and advocacy.
  - An experienced mentor can help nurses stay motivated and navigate the pathway to legislative engagement.

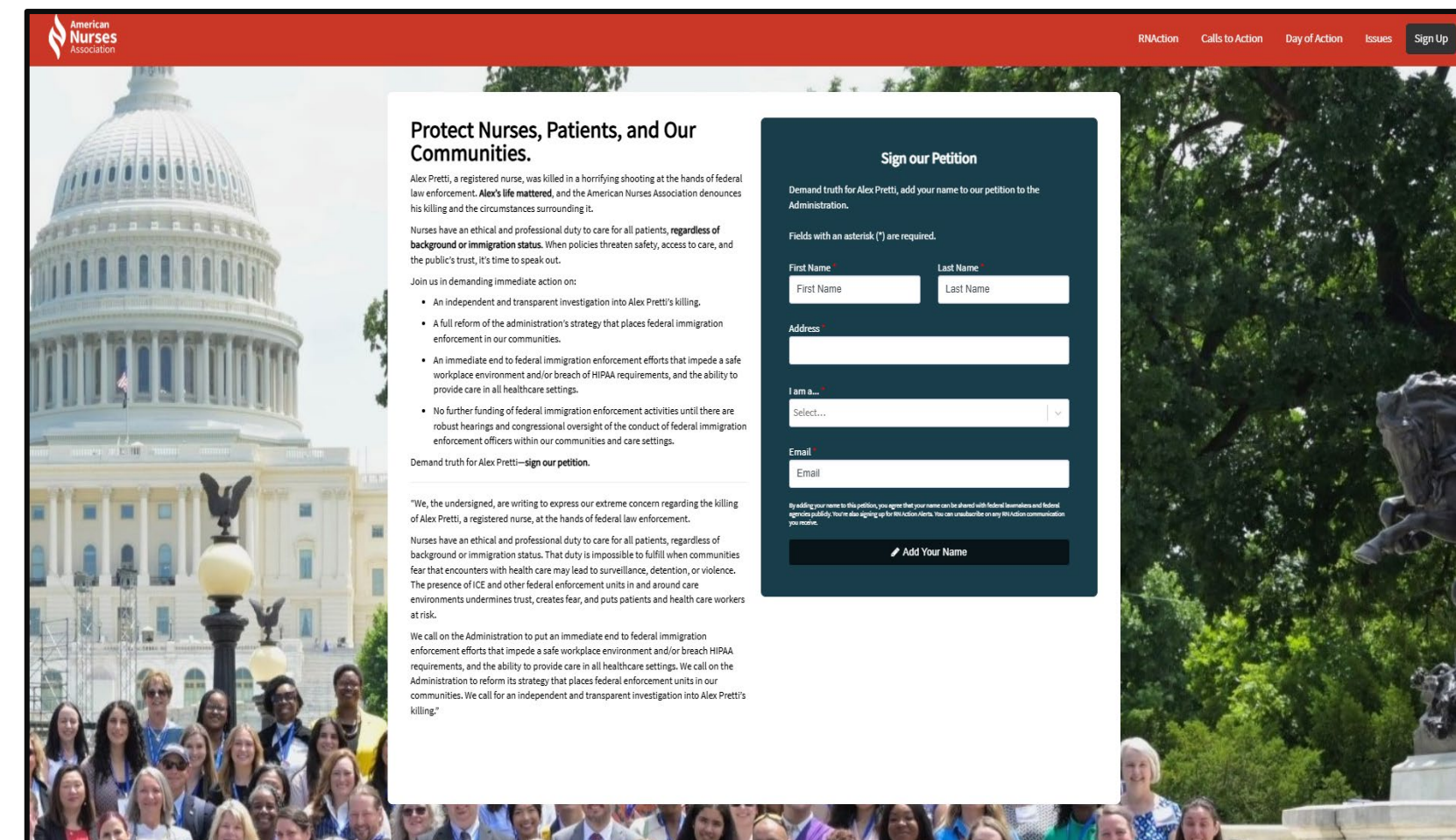


## Best Practices

- Join a professional nursing organization
- Follow elected officials on social media
- Attend Nurses Day at the Capitol events
- Participate in town halls
- Sign petitions for healthcare initiatives
- Utilize resources to support advocacy work
  - ❖ <https://www.Healing-Politics.org>
  - ❖ <https://FastDemocracy.com>
  - ❖ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/>
- Share personal stories when meeting elected officials
- Engage in letter writing campaigns & op-eds
- Provide subject matter expertise at stakeholder meetings
- Provide formal testimony at committee hearings
- Use your personal contact info when engaging in advocacy

## Examples of Advocacy

- Served as a subject-matter expert and stakeholder advisor for Colorado's SB25-166 workplace violence legislation.
  - ❖ Collaborated with state nursing organizations and healthcare leaders to align legislative definitions with Joint Commission and national quality frameworks.
- Nurses have testified in favor or in opposition on a variety of bills:
  - ❖ SB25-166 Health-Care Workplace Violence Incentive Payments
  - ❖ SB25-071 Prohibit Restrictions on 340B Drugs
  - ❖ HB24-1066 Prevent Workplace Violence in Health-Care Settings
  - ❖ HB23-1215 Limits On Hospital Facility Fees



## Discussion/Implications

- Nurses exhibit the necessary skills for advocacy work:
  - Critical thinking
  - Conflict management
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Ability to listen carefully
  - Ability to ask clarifying questions
  - Persuasive communication skills
  - Ability to create meaningful connections with patients
  - Ability to build trust and rapport with patients under heightened uncertainty
- This vantage point of providing care to patients when they are most vulnerable provides deep insights into the barriers that affect their ability to live long and happy lives, as healthily as possible.
- Lawmakers need nurses to tell the stories that only nurses can tell, ensuring a healthier future for all.
- It has been said that influence is unattainable for the invisible and silent.
- Society needs nurses to impact nonpartisan legislation by leveraging their passion, expertise and skills now more than ever. It is time to meet the moment, to elevate our voices, and to step forward on behalf of our patients and our profession.



## References & Resources



SCAN ME

