

Constituent Feedback: Councilor Stevens is Improving Access to Healthcare

When one of my nurses approached me asking for help, I knew just who to turn to - Executive Councilor Janet Stevens. The Councilor was instrumental in assisting the Edgewood Center during the Covid-19 crisis, taking a particular interest in the needs of the elderly and the staff that care for them. Knowing the Councilor as a commonsense individual with a penchant for getting things done, I turned to her for help.

The state of New Hampshire Board of Nursing has applied a rule that disallows an individual from taking the NCLEX exam greater than 6 months after the completion of their formal training. In other words, if an individual who has completed nursing school fails to take the NCLEX exam within 6 months of graduation, per the Board of Nursing, that individual is not able to sit for the licensure exam in NH - ever. This is not the case in other states.

In fact, our own Board directed my employee to seek residency in Maine, take the NCLEX there and then transfer her license to NH. My employee who pursued higher education to transition from a Licensed Practical Nurse to a Registered nurse simultaneously raised a family while going to nursing school and working endless hours on covid units during the pandemic found herself unable to pursue her nursing license due to this arbitrary rule.

As this made no sense given the competency of this individual as well as the intense need for nurses in the state of NH, I turned to Executive Councilor Janet Stevens for help. Councilor Stevens understood immediately the incongruous Board of Nursing rule in a state literally dying for licensed nurses. Councilor Stevens took the time to hear my employee's personal and professional story, showing genuine care for her as an individual and also as a vital member of our community. The idea that my employee would have to leave the great state of NH to pursue her licensure was of great offense to Councilor Stevens as she understood the value this individual has for our state and also the value our state holds for our employee and her family.

Councilor Stevens was on a mission! She connected me and my employee with the director of the Office of Professional Licensure who researched the rules surrounding licensure in our state. My nurse was encouraged to submit a waiver to the Board of Nursing's rules which was granted allowing her the opportunity to demonstrate her competency by sitting for the NCLEX exam - passing was up to her. I am beyond happy to report that the great state of NH is made stronger by the newly licensed Registered Nurse who passed the NCLEX exam after hard work, hours of study and good old fashioned NH grit!

We cannot express our gratitude to Councilor Stevens loudly enough. She was there for us during the pandemic and now through paying attention to the stories and lives of those who live in our state - making life better not only for my employee but for the countless number of Granite Staters this wonderful nurse will take care of during the long and illustrious career ahead of her!

With Gratitude,
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