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NEWS RELEASE



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AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION FILES AMICUS BRIEF
Legal Action in Support of Sentosa Nurses

SILVER SPRING, MD – In a strong show of support for the Sentosa nurses, today The American Nurses Association and its affiliate, the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), today filed an amicus brief with the New York State Supreme Court supporting a motion to drop criminal charges against the group of Filipino registered nurses charged with patient endangerment after resigning their positions.

“These nurses committed no crime, and this improper prosecution, if continued, sets a dangerous precedent for all health care professionals. Registered nurses and other health care professionals will be afraid to quit their jobs, or cooperate with others with respect to leaving a negative work environment. ANA believes these nurses did not act in an unprofessional manner or abandon their patients, and in fact, they resigned, in part, over abysmal staffing levels; their having done so is consistent with their ethical obligations. ANA opposes the criminalization of RN’s’ actions that are most appropriately viewed through the lens of professional standards or civil liability,” remarked ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

“These nurses aren’t criminals – they’re heroes,” said Barbara Crane, RN, president of the NYSNA Delegate Assembly. “They refused to give in to an employer that tried to force them to work in unsafe patient care conditions. As persons of great integrity, they had the courage to speak up on behalf of their patients and nurses everywhere. For this, they are being unfairly hounded by the county prosecutor.”

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ANA has been a strong supporter of the Sentosa nurses, who say they were brought to New York under false pretenses and denied the rights guaranteed by their employment contract. When the nurses resigned, their employer accused them of professional misconduct before the state Office of Professional Discipline, which dismissed the charges. A more recent report by the New York State Department of Health also found no evidence of patient harm resulting from the nurses' action. Regardless of these findings, in March 2007 ten of the RNs were indicted in Suffolk County Supreme Court on charges of endangering their patients, all pled not guilty.

The nurses had been recruited by the Sentosa Recruitment Agency to work at specific nursing home facilities on Long Island. When they arrived in the U.S., they discovered they actually were working for a staffing agency, Prompt Nurses Employment Agency. Over a period of months, the nurses said, the agency refused to pay them according to the terms of their contracts. They also said they were not properly trained for their new jobs and were required to care for more patients than they believed were safe.

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.