Nurses, Teachers Workforce Solution

THE SITUATION

Training and educating more teachers and nurses will help mitigate staffing shortages that were dire prior to the pandemic and have ballooned since. Legislation with parameters to prevent a retirement exodus, as well as a sunset date, will allow retired teachers and nursing faculty to return to teaching now, when they are most needed. Raising the limit on allowable pay percentage of previous salary and/or not counting current employment against retirement will provide greater incentive for these workers to return from retirement.

THE GOAL

Removing the retirement benefits roadblock, which financially punishes individuals making more than 25 percent of previous salary, will allow retirees with institutional knowledge to return immediately to classrooms. More than 1,400 qualified Louisiana nursing school applicants could not be admitted in 2020 (Louisiana Center for Nursing 2020 Snapshot of Nursing Education Capacity), with the top reasons for turning away qualified students being:

- Budgeted faculty positions not available
- Qualified faculty not available
- Faculty salary not competitive
- Classroom space not available

THE OPPORTUNITY

While the COVID-19 pandemic led to broad workforce declines across all sectors, early retirements among older Americans in particular were unexpected and critical losses. Their long-term impacts are still not well understood, but a recent upward "unretirement" trend suggests some of these retirees want to return to the workforce and could help alleviate shortages.

THE U.S. LOST 540,000 HEALTHCARE WORKERS FROM THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2020.

- U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS