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March 29, 2007

The Honorable Robert Andrews
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Andrews and Young:

On behalf of the American Nurses Association, I am writing to endorse H.R. 1644/S. 969, the Re-Empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Tradeworkers (RESPECT) Act. As a multi-purpose professional organization representing the diverse interests of every registered nurse in the United States, the ANA has long supported the rights of registered nurses to unionize.

The American Nurses Association is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's Registered Nurses through its 54 constituent member associations. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the economic and general welfare of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by advocating on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

ANA is deeply concerned by the September 2006 National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decision in Oakwood Healthcare, which effectively limits the rights of thousands of registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses to retain basic protections under federal labor law. Under the Oakwood ruling, workers who may assign tasks, direct co-workers or utilize independent judgment, but who do not have the ability to hire, fire, transfer, suspend, reward or discipline their colleagues, can be classified as supervisors. This broadened definition of supervisor could have a serious and negative impact on Registered Nurses, who within the context of their set scope of practice, exercise critical judgment and delegate tasks among health care workers, but perform no other managerial functions. The RESPECT Act would protect nurses and other workers by modifying the definition of supervisor to ensure that skilled and experienced workers in a wide range of industries who sometimes instruct co-workers do not lose their collective bargaining rights.

ANA has a strong track record in preserving and protecting nurses' inalienable right to engage in collective bargaining. We applaud your efforts to protect this right and we look forward to working with you to advance H.R. 1644.

Sincerely,

Rose Gonzalez, MPS, RN
Director, Government Affairs