

Hi, my name is Luke Downs. I was a combat medic from 2015 until 2019. Since then, I have pursued a career in nursing because I believe the skills I already had would easily translate. To become an RN, I needed to graduate from a nursing program and pass the state nursing licensure exam, the NCLEX.

After initially enrolling at Ohio State, I decided to transfer to Hondros College of Nursing. I transferred some credits, so I expected to complete my program quickly with some GI Bill remaining—but I was wrong.

I needed to pass Nursing 240 to graduate. As part of that course, Hondros requires students to take a practice test for the NCLEX, called the HESI. When I first took the class, Hondros required students to get a minimum score of 900 on the HESI to be able to graduate and sit for the NCLEX. A 900 is close to a 90% and is well above the score needed to pass the NCLEX. Despite my training and extensive studying, I missed the benchmark by one or two questions and received an 894. After failing to hit the minimum score twice, Hondros said I would not be allowed to take the class or the HESI practice test again. I was shocked. I was not even going to receive a degree.

I did not understand how I could pass all my classes, but not be allowed to graduate and take the NCLEX, just because I did not get the score Hondros set for a practice exam. I appealed the decision, complained to the Ohio Board of Nursing, and even contacted my congressperson. Eventually, I was reinstated to the program. But I should not have had to do any of that because, in the meantime, the school had reduced their minimum score for the HESI to 850. Even though I had already exceeded that score, and otherwise passed Nursing 240, the school required me to retake and pay for Nursing 240, and retake the HESI. This was a total waste of my time and exhausted the rest of my GI Bill benefits.

Fortunately, I received an 888 and was allowed to graduate.

Today, I am asking you to do something about this for other students who may not be as fortunate as me. Students should be given their nursing degree if they complete the program. Not only do they need the degree to take the NCLEX, but even if they don't become a nurse, they need their degree for other jobs. Schools should not be allowed to keep students from graduating and from taking the NCLEX based on the results of a practice test.

Thank you for your time.