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SUBMITTED BY: Oregon Health Care Association

*Oregon's Voice for Long-Term Care & Senior Housing*

**Testimony in support of HB 4091  
February 8, 2012**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 4091. OHCA represents more than 620 nursing facilities, assisted living, residential care and senior housing facilities, and private sector, licensed in-home care agencies, all of whom are required to conduct criminal background checks on prospective employees. On behalf of our members, we support HB 4091 and the -5 amendments.

Protecting our residents and providing the highest quality of care is our members' number one priority. OHCA members rely on the results of criminal background checks as a means of ensuring we employ individuals who are fit and qualified to work with the vulnerable individuals who require long term care services.

As employers, the most important changes to the workgroup created in HB 4091 are to (1) ensure a timely process for conducting checks and delivering results; (2) reduce the number and types of criminal records checks required; (3) allow for transferability of criminal records checks among agencies and organizations; and (4) provide for a system to update criminal records checks when certain events occur.

We believe the -5 amendments will contribute significantly to improving the quality and reliability of Oregon's criminal background check system. The Affordable Care Act established the framework for a nationwide program to conduct background checks on a statewide basis on all prospective employees of long term care facilities and providers. Since 2010, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has awarded more than \$38 million to 17 States to design comprehensive national background check programs for long term care employees. The fifth solicitation for grant proposals for inclusion in this National Background Check Program deadline has been extended until February 28, 2012. Awards are issued on a non-competitive basis, meaning if Oregon applies, the State is virtually guaranteed of being awarded federal funds at a 3:1 match rate.

Thank you for the opportunity to share OHCA's support for this legislation.