



**Testimony in Support of HB 3079**

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013

House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

Sarah Baessler

Director of Health Policy and Government Relations

Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of HB 3079. HB 3079 would require for-profit higher educational institutions to provide potential students with facts regarding the cost of education, loans, job placement rates, and related data prior to enrollment.

As many of you may know, admittance into nursing school is extremely difficult due to the lack of nurse educators. Many aspiring nurses who are highly qualified, are turned away from nursing programs because there simply isn't space available. As a result, many aspiring nurses turn to for-profit higher education institutions for their education. Although some for-profit institutions may be a valid option for aspiring nursing students, not all for-profit higher education institutions equally prepare their students. Students should be able to make choice about their education armed with as much information as possible.

Many of Oregon's nursing students who attended for-profit programs have experienced difficulties transferring credits to Oregon's traditional educational institutions, and some struggle to demonstrate nursing competencies. Others who complete a nursing program at a for-profit higher education institution, find that their degree is not as valued in the job market as a not-for-profit degree. HB 3079 would help to ensure that each student has the knowledge necessary to make decisions regarding their education and their future employment.

Students can pay a great deal of tuition to for-profit higher education institutions and are unable to find employment in their related field upon graduation. For some students, this is because job placement is more difficult than they anticipated it would be, and for others it's because their degree is not valued as highly as not-for-profit degrees. Students should have access to this information prior to committing to a path of education in order to ensure that each student is empowered to make the choice that will best prepare them for the future.

HB 3079 does not discourage students from pursuing for-profit education opportunities, but it does insure that each student is educated in the costs and benefits of a for-profit higher education institution. For example, if a student begins their nursing education at a for-profit institution, they should know whether or not their credits are transferable to a traditional institution, such as the University of Portland, should they wish to transfer, or pursue an additional degree.

HB 3079 enables all students to have access to information to best inform their educational choices.

ONA urges your support of House Bill 3079.