

February 11, 2015

Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care
Oregon Legislative Assembly

Re: HB 2541

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

OSPIRG supports HB 2541, an important measure to protect patients, preserve the safety and integrity of blood drives in Oregon, and ensure public confidence in the blood donation process.

Giving blood saves lives. It is the right thing to do. For the vast majority of us, blood donation is a simple, safe, quick and nearly painless experience. However, some blood donation companies are looking to cut medical professionals from their blood drives, which could put patient safety at risk.

On rare occasions, blood donors experience serious medical problems. Some donors faint and injure themselves. For individuals with rare medical conditions, blood donation may be dangerous. Thankfully, medical professionals are there at blood drives to ensure patient safety and the integrity of the blood supply for patients who need transfusions. If those professionals are no longer there, patients may be put at risk.

Licensed health care professionals play a number of critical roles in blood drives: Assessing potential donors, overseeing donation procedures and ensuring donor safety and the safety of the blood supply. If these roles are not performed by fully qualified medical professionals, patient safety could suffer.

To ensure that there are enough blood donors to meet demand and the needs of patients, the public must have faith in the safety and integrity of the blood donation process. Polling conducted by the Oregon Nurses Association demonstrates that large majorities of Oregonians would be less confident in the donation process, and less likely to donate blood themselves, if qualified medical professionals were not present at blood drives.

Oregonians are counting on you to stand up for them and preserve the safety and integrity of blood drives and the blood donation process. Please vote yes on HB 2541.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jesse Ellis O'Brien
OSPIRG Health Care Advocate