

AFSCME Council 75 urges your support of SB 469

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and members of Senate Health Care Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 469, the Safe Nurse Staffing bill. Oregon AFSCME represent hospital workers all over the state from our largest local union at Oregon Health Science University to one of our smallest at good Shepard Hospital in Hermiston Oregon.

We regularly hear from our members on how nurse staffing committees need to be strengthened. In one location, the committee currently exists on paper only with a good portion of its membership, management and represented staff, no longer working at the facility. We also have heard concerns that other direct care staff are not part of the committee. Our members know that appropriate direct care staffing is a key component of quality patient care.

For these reasons we are strongly supportive of all of the goals of the bill and in particular the -1 amendments. Requiring the committee to include a representative from other direct care staff will provide a voice for those who assist with the care of patients and also feel the stress of chronic understaffing. Requiring the staffing committees to provide minutes from their meetings and to meet quarterly will help ensure that the committee is elevated from “in name only” to a committee that addresses staffing issues with input from the staff who do direct care. Requiring the committee to consider evidence based guidelines and standards will help ensure that staffing will be made with the health of patients and staff kept in mind and not just the hospital’s bottom line.

AFSCME urges you to adopt the -1 amendments and pass SB 469.

Respectfully submitted by Eva Rippeteau, AFSCME Council 75 political coordinator

