



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2804

February 23, 2015

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee:

My name is Michael Van Patten and I am a Sergeant at the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP). I have worked for the Department of Corrections (DOC) for just short of 30 years. I am also the President of the Association of Oregon Corrections Employees (AOCE). AOCE represents almost 800 men and women working for DOC at the maximum security OSP, the medium security Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI) and two minimum security institutions – Mill Creek Correctional Facility (MCCF) and South Fork Forest Camp (SFFC).

At OSP we represent numerous nurses who have to work with a very dangerous inmate population on a daily basis. We have seen a huge retention problem over the years. Our nurses are overworked, exhausted, and often face mandatory overtime assignments. HB 2804 would limit the number of hours a nurse could be required to work by DOC. This would not only ensure the safety and security of our nurses, but for the inmates as well. We also hope it will help recruit qualified nurses and retain them once they arrive. Far too often they see the working conditions, long hours, and number of mandatory overtime shifts and we cannot keep nurses on staff. The nurses who currently work at OSP perform an exceptional job but they too deserve guaranteed limits on the number of hours they must work.

I urge you to support House Bill 2804.

Thank you,
Sgt. Michael Van Patten
AOCE President