



Testimony in Support of SB 921

April 6, 2015

Senate Business and Transportation Committee

Sarah Baessler

Director of Health Policy and Government Relations

Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of Senate Bill 921.

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is Oregon's oldest and largest professional association and union representing more than 13,000 registered nurses statewide. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care workforce, and practice in every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health.

Senate Bill 921 directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to complete installation of safety barriers in highway medians where they are needed before 2022.

As nurses, our members often care for people who have been injured in car accidents. They witness both the short-term effects of minor injuries and the tragedies when permanent disability or death is the outcome. You are all aware of the accident that claimed two lives on Interstate 5 near Salem last fall. One of those lives was Steven Fritz, the husband of our nursing colleague Amanda Fritz.

Senate Bill 921 is an important public health issue for all Oregonians.

In 2014, there were more than 350 traffic deaths in Oregon. With population growth as well as the increased truck traffic that accompanies an improving economy, efforts to improve traffic safety and achieve Oregon's stated goal of zero traffic fatalities are more important than ever.

Safety barriers provide important protections that help reduce, and in some cases prevent, injuries and fatalities. This bill gives ODOT clear direction to utilize safety barriers and helps reduce delays in needed safety improvements.

ONA urges you to support Senate Bill 921.

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ONA is an affiliate of the American Nurses Association, National Federation of Nurses, AFT and AFL-CIO