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Testimony before the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

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SB 459, Speed Limit Increases

Chair Beyer and members of the committee, my name is Katy King and I'm here today representing OCEP, the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians. OCEP is a medical society that has represented physicians specializing in emergency medicine since 1971 and its members share a commitment to improve emergency healthcare for all Oregonians.

SB 459 increases the interstate highway speed limit to 70 miles per hour for most vehicles. Emergency physicians oppose this bill for one simple reason: speed kills.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Act (NHTSA) estimated 10,219 lives were lost in speed-related crashes in 2012. Speeding play a role in 30 percent of all fatal crashes because it reduces the ability of passenger restraint systems and roadway safety guardrails to protect the driver and passengers in the vehicle.

Traumatic injury from motor vehicle crash is also one of the most frequent causes of injury to patients treated by emergency physicians. To reduce fatalities and injuries, OCEP recommends robust enforcement of existing speed limits and opposes any further increases in speed limits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.