



OREGON
NURSING LEADERSHIP
COLLABORATIVE

Testimony for Senate Committee on Workforce

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In Support of HB 2684-A

April 29, 2015

Oregon Nursing Leadership Collaborative

Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Nursing Leadership Collaborative (ONLC), I write today to ask for your support of HB 2684 to allow retired nurses to be employed full-time by public employers, specifically as nursing faculty, without loss of retirement benefits.

The ONLC was formed in 1999 and includes representatives from the following groups: Oregon Nurses Association, Northwest Organization of Nurse Executives, Oregon Center for Nursing, Oregon State Board of Nursing, Oregon Association of Associate Degree and Practical Nurse Programs and the Oregon Council of Deans.

In 2007, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 4 which allowed for the exemption to work-hour limitations while receiving PERS retirement benefits. This exemption allows much-needed, experienced nursing faculty to continue in their roles. These experienced faculty members may teach students or may be involved in guiding new nursing faculty who will educate the future nursing workforce. The provisions put in place in 2007 have allowed experienced nurses to continue their work at OHSU hospital and clinics and at the state hospital. The five OHSU campuses have also filled faculty positions under this provision.

The shortage of nursing faculty is documented nationally and is evident in Oregon. In the 2013-2014 academic year, 35 nursing faculty positions were vacant in Oregon. Many programs receive only one or two applications from qualified individuals for open nursing faculty positions. According to a Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions released by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in October 2013, a total of 1,358 faculty vacancies were identified in a survey of 680 nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs across the country. Besides the vacancies, schools cited the need to create an additional 98 faculty positions to accommodate student demand. The data show a national nurse faculty vacancy rate of 8.3%. Approximately 25% of the current nursing faculty in Oregon plan retirement in the next two years.

Currently, the provisions of SB 4 are scheduled to expire on January 2, 2016. House Bill 2684-A will remove this sunset and allow nurses and nursing faculty who work for public entities to continue to work, alleviating these workforce shortages and keeping experienced nurses in the workforce. The bill currently allows for an extension of this sunset until Jan 2026.

ONLC urges support of HB 2684-A.