



Testimony in Support of HB 2764 A

May 13, 2015

Senate Committee on Workforce

Sarah Baessler

Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of HB 2764 A.

ONA supports this legislation as a tool to ensure that injured workers have access to attorneys who can help them navigate the increasingly complex workers compensation system.

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent over 13,000 Oregon Nurses. Oregon Nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting imaginable, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers, and community-based public health.

Unfortunately, like many other front line workers, nurses face a variety of occupational hazards and a relatively high incidence of workplace injuries, some of which require time away from work and interacting with the workers compensation system.

In particular, work-related musculoskeletal disorders are a significant occupational health problem for nurses and other health care workers. A 2011 American Nurses Association survey revealed that 80 percent of nurses have worked despite frequent musculoskeletal pain and, according to the US Department of Labor, nurses consistently rank in the top 10 occupations most susceptible to overexertion injuries, such as those caused by lifting or moving patients. It's estimated that health care work place injuries are severely underreported.

Musculoskeletal injuries often result in chronic pain and require time off work. For nurses and other health care workers, these injuries can require transfer to a different unit, and can be career-altering or career-ending.

This legislation takes important steps to ensure that injured workers have access to attorneys, and to encourage insurers to process claims quickly.

ONA urges your support of HB 2764 A.