



Testimony in Support of SB 72

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Co-Chairs Bates and Nathanson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 72.

This legislation proposes a license surcharge of \$9 to be assessed at time of licensure or renewal for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The surcharge would be used to provide a stable source of funding for the core missions of the Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN).

Founded in 2002, the Oregon Center for Nursing remains a critical partner for the Oregon Nurses Association and other nursing stakeholders. For most of its history, a member of ONA's staff has served as a board member at OCN. The board has reflected the breadth of organizations with an interest in nursing and Oregon's nursing workforce.

Nurses are the largest group of health professionals in Oregon and nationally, and are a key part of the health care workforce. As our health care system changes, and the population of both nurses and patients ages, policy makers and others can look to OCN for current and detailed analysis of Oregon's nursing workforce.

Research on priority nursing issues is the core mission of OCN and the work that the surcharge would support. Funding through the surcharge would also support the work of OCN to convene nurses to address the priority issues that OCN researches.

OCN fills a unique role in the nursing community in Oregon as a nursing workforce datacenter. Data collected and analyzed by the Oregon Center for Nursing can help individual nurses, employers, legislators, and other nursing organizations better understand the dynamics of both the current and future nursing workforce. There is no other organization in Oregon poised to do this type of data analysis.

This is the type of data that can help project the future supply of nurses, and whether that supply will meet the demand. OCN can analyze gaps in nursing education, such as the faculty shortage, and convene stakeholders to form data-based policy recommendations.

ONA didn't take lightly the decision to support an increased fee, as this is a fee that will directly impact the vast majority of ONA members.

A license surcharge is a concept we've discussed with OCN for several years, although this is the first time a proposal has come to the legislature. Over a number of months our policy committee carefully considered whether to support a license surcharge. Throughout our

process of vetting OCN's request, we worked closely with OCN leadership to make some modifications to the size and scope of their proposal. Our criteria for taking a position supporting this fee included being sure that the fee would fund work that wasn't redundant with work done by other organizations, that the work would be of value to ONA members and the nursing community as a whole, and that the fee was the right size to ensure an ability for OCN to have stable funding to do this body of work, but not any higher than that. We are confident that the proposal before you today meets those criteria; that it will fund a unique body of work that will be valuable to ONA members and others, and that the proposal is right-sized.

Given the focus of the proposal before you on the core missions of OCN of research and uniting stakeholders, and the importance of these roles for the entire nursing community, ONA supports this surcharge. We believe it's a worthwhile investment to sustain the research capacity of OCN, particularly given the ongoing changes in our health care system, the shortage of nursing faculty, and the projected shortage of registered nurses.