



Dear Chair Holvey and members of the committee,

Thank you, for hearing HB 4011 and for the opportunity to testify. My name is Eva Rippeteau, I am a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME Council 75. I am here today with James Cook, AFSCME Local 3295 president, and Micah Lewis a member of AFSCME Local 3295, both are RNs at the Oregon State Hospital We also represent the psychiatrists at the state hospital AFSCME Local 3327. Unfortunately, none of the doctors were able to join us this morning.

Frank Warner, another Local 3295 nurse was also unable to join us today as well. Had he been here, he would have told the story of how many times this local has come to the legislature to ask for PERS 25 year retirement. Previously, they have been told that the employees of the Oregon State Hospital were deserving of the earlier retirement benefit, but that there was not enough money. Since, they were told that several yes ago, the population of patients coming from jails to treat them and prepare them to aid and assist in their trials, known as 370s has increased. Many of the patients haven't been receiving treatment and may have also been using drugs before coming to the state hospital. Their needs are intense and they are far from stable.

As I have gotten to know our members who work at the Oregon State Hospital, I know that they care deeply about the work they do and the people that are in their care. This doesn't take away the day to day stress of the work. One RN has told me about how the one and only time that she ever was injured at work was when she turned her back on someone that was experiencing a break. She doesn't blame the patient, even with that level of understanding and compassion it impacted her and adds to her daily strain. The risk and stress exists for all who work with the patients. Allowing for them to be included in the 25 year PERs would give the employees at the hospital a much deserved and needed benefit.

I urge you to schedule a work session and allow for the bill to go to Ways and Means. Thank you, I welcome any questions.