



**Joint Committee on Referendum 301**  
Chris Hewitt, Oregon Nurses Association  
September 14, 2017

Chair Rayfield, Chair Devlin, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the draft title and explanatory statement for Referendum 301 to overturn the Oregon Healthcare Protections Bill. The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent nearly 15,000 Oregon nurses who 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.

As an organization that represents a diverse range of nurses who provide compassionate care to Oregonians across the state, ONA has been paying very close attention to Referendum 301 because of the huge implications it will have on health care for hundreds of thousands of Oregonians.

ONA is deeply concerned that the ballot title as drafted fails to capture the wide-ranging and serious effects of Referendum 301. Without the key funding provisions of House Bill 2391, more than 350,000 vulnerable Oregonians are at risk of losing their health care because the state will be forced to forego up to \$5 billion in matching federal funds that help cover our Medicaid population. Voters deserve to know exactly what is on the line with Referendum 301. Yet, as currently written, the title fails to capture the federal funding that will be forfeited and the resulting insurance losses for countless Oregonians.

As they cast their ballot, Oregonians should also understand that another 220,000 Oregonians will see their premiums rise at least 6 percent without the funding outlined in House Bill 2391 for Oregon's reinsurance program. This effect has been well-documented by the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, and Oregonians should understand clearly that if they purchase their insurance on the individual market, then repealing HB 2391 will have a direct impact on the cost of their care.

Ultimately, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians stand to lose their health care or see the cost of their care increase as a result of repealing key pieces of HB 2391. The ballot title should be clear and not shy away from describing that reality.

ONA nurses are acutely aware that health care coverage is a life-or-death issue for many Oregon families. Consequently, it's critical that the ballot title for Referendum 301 accurately convey the impact of repealing or upholding key funding pieces of the Oregon Healthcare Protections Bill.