



Senator Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony. I the President-elect of the Oregon Society of Anesthesiologists (OSA), which is a group comprised of over 600 physicians who are working to uphold the highest standards of anesthesia care and patient advocacy by promoting patient safety, research, education, and innovation in anesthesia.

The Oregon Society of Anesthesiologists urge your no vote on SB 487, which would unnecessarily double the cap on noneconomic damages. Already, there are no limits on economic damages, which are objective and fair. Increasing the cap on punitive, noneconomic damages will not help patients and their families. Instead, it will raise medical costs and diminish access to healthcare for all, especially those in rural areas where access is already a problem.

It was not so long ago that Oregon experienced a crisis in availability of OB-GYNs due to prohibitive malpractice insurance rates. Raising the cap on noneconomic damages will raise liability insurance rates for all types of physicians, which will ultimately raise costs for patients.

Many neighboring states understand this balance, and have capped noneconomic damages at \$500,000 or less. For instance, California's caps its noneconomic damages at \$250,000. States with higher noneconomic damages caps, such as Tennessee, have much higher medical malpractice insurance premiums. There is evidence that a rise in malpractice premiums directly results in a decrease in rural physicians, and a two-fold decrease in older rural physicians.¹ Raising the noneconomic damages cap will disproportionately affect rural patients' access to physician-led care.

Please vote no on SB 487, and keep health care costs reasonable in our state.

Regards,

Kate Ropp
President-elect
Oregon Society of Anesthesiologists

1: Baicker, Katherine, and Amitabh Chandra. "The Effect Of Malpractice On The Delivery Of Health Care," Forum for Health Economics and Policy, 2005, v8, Article 4, (Berkeley Electronic Press)