



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2862

March 28, 2017

House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

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Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee,

I would like to take this opportunity to share my full support for HB 2862- Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment. Having been one of the seven nursing faculty members who received initial faculty loan repayment funds from Senate Bill 701, established in 2009, I can honestly say that I have been able to be committed to my role as a nurse educator in the State of Oregon as a direct result of that investment.

I will share a bit of my personal story in effort to emphasize how the funds that I received over the course of five years in loan repayment allowed me to become a nurse educator and move into a faculty administrator today. In 1993, I completed my BS nursing education as a non-traditional student and having a family. Even as I was completing my BS in nursing, I knew that I wanted to pursue graduate nursing education; however time and cost were prohibitive at that time. In 2002, I did however have the opportunity to return to OHSU School of Nursing, and completed both a MPH and a PhD in 2006. Having already been involved in nursing practice, nursing administration, and clinical research, I chose to take additional courses in nursing education, with a hope that I might be able to give back to the nursing profession as a nurse educator.

In the Fall of 2006, I took my first position as a nurse educator at George Fox University, which I enjoyed very much, though I incurred a significant wage decrease. My salary as a nurse educator with a doctoral degree was less than I had made without graduate education in a healthcare system and I had student loan debt. In my second year of teaching my husband had a work-related injury, resulting in multiple surgeries and a need for him to recover and retool his career. It became necessary for me to take an additional nursing position to supplement our family income. It was during this time that I learned of, and applied for the faculty loan repayment funds.

Now six years later, I have no student debt and am happy to say that I have been able to maintain my role as a nurse educator and leader, something that I would not have been able to do without the loan repayment funds that I have received. I am very grateful for the repayment support that I received, and truly hope that this opportunity can be provided to other nursing faculty through the approval of HB 2862-Faculty Loan Repayment.

I urge your support for HB 2862.