



Testimony on House Bill 2830-2

June 13, 2017

Joint Committee on Tax Reform

Susan Walters, RN

Co-chairs Barnhart and Hass and members of the committee,

My name Susan Walters, I live in Eugene, and I care deeply about services offered under the Oregon Health Plan, particularly for children and the elderly. I'm very concerned that because of our unstable and inadequate tax structure, we are going to have to make cuts to health care access. I hope you will put patients first.

The bill you are considering is a positive development and I support it, but our vulnerable citizens, the elderly, children and those with disabilities deserve far more and I hope the legislature will pass a tax increase that will be able to make a meaningful difference in our state.

For many of our patients, health care cuts would be devastating. I am a nurse working for a large not-for-profit home health agency in Eugene. Our nurses care for hundreds of residents in Lane County. We manage care for patients served through the Oregon Health Plan. Many of these patients are forced to make the very real daily decision: Should I fill my prescriptions, or should I buy groceries? We see this scenario play out in patients' homes daily. The predicament our patients find themselves in is because health care funding and access is already scarce. Further cuts would be devastating to the most vulnerable of our community.

Additionally, school run clinics provide essential preventative care and primary treatment. For youth that do not have access to private physicians or for whom transportation is a barrier, these services play an essential role toward life-long physical and behavioral health, and very importantly, educational success.

We can't keep string together piece-meal budgets. We need a revenue package that is significant and reverses decades of disinvestment in our schools and services. I'm urging you not just to raise new revenue, but to raise game-changing revenue that tackles access to care issues and overall health outcomes for all Oregonians.

Our communities, our children, and our patients are all counting on you. Thank you for your time.