



## Testimony in Support of HJR 203

Savannah Jensen, RN

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Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Joint Resolution 203, the HOPE initiative. My name is Savannah Jensen and I am a registered nurse at Providence Newberg here today representing the Oregon Nurses Association. ONA represents nearly 15,000 nurses who work in a variety of health care settings from large hospitals like mine to local community clinics, school-based health centers, and local public health.

Across all of these practice settings, ONA members understand what access to health insurance means for patients in Oregon. As a nurse, I see the clear differences in outcomes when a patient has been able to regularly get primary care check-ups, receive the education necessary to prevent chronic diseases, or get routinely tested for potentially life-threatening illnesses. And, too often, positive health outcomes are reliant on whether a patient has had the ability or privilege to be able to afford and access health insurance.

Now, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 95% of Oregonians have access to care, which has made a tremendous impact on health outcomes. However, it's critical that as a state we are always working to ensure that 100% of Oregonians are able to get the health care they need and deserve. And we should be making sure that patients can *meaningfully* get care through affordability.

The HOPE initiative upholds the value that as nurses and Oregonians we hold dear: that everyone should be able to get the care that they need. By enshrining the right to health care in the state Constitution, we will take a critical step in continuing to foster a lasting and transformative health care system for decades to come, even in the face of national uncertainty. Further, it allows Oregon to continue to explore models to keep costs down, ensuring that Oregonians from rural Oregon, to low and middle-income populations, and communities of color, are able to access and afford health care.

As nurses, we are bound by a code of ethics that puts the patient -- whether an individual, family, community or population -- first. It's time that Oregon codified the commitment to patients and our community by ensuring access to quality, affordable health care in our state constitution.

The HOPE Amendment is an important step for some of the brightest minds in health care to come together to find solutions to make sure that 100% of Oregonians can meaningfully access and afford comprehensive health care. On behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association, I urge your support for HJR 203.