



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2230

February 7, 2019

House Committee on Judiciary

Chris Hewitt

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2230 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association. ONA represents nearly 15,000 nurses throughout the state, providing care in almost every setting of our health care industry imaginable—staff nurses in large and small hospitals alike, school base health centers, local public health departments, and some county corrections facilities. Oregon has long led the nation with regard to nursing practice, standards and safety—for registered nurses and advance practice nurses alike across numerous patient care environments.

In our state's acute care hospital settings, the advancement of nursing standards has recently included the establishment of reasonable statutory restrictions on mandatory overtime that registered nurses can be required to work. These overtime work limits were borne out of an inherent recognition that the extended application of nurse overtime can adversely affect patient safety and is often linked to costly problems such as clinician fatigue as well as staff burnout and increased turnover. Consequently, ONA strongly supports HB 2230, which seeks to establish similar limits on the use of mandatory overtime for nurses working within our state's correctional facilities.

Under Oregon's current updated hospital nurse staffing law enacted in 2015, nurses cannot be required to work beyond their agreed upon and prearranged shift, more than 48 hours in any hospital-defined work week, or more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period and must be provided provide a 10-hour rest period after having worked 12 hours in a 24-hour period. These limits resulted from mounting research consistently indicating that work duration, and number of weekly hours worked can have significant effects on errors in patient-care. Notably, the propensity for errors in care to occur has been found to be three times higher when nurses worked shifts of 12.5 hours or greater.¹

Additionally, studies have routinely demonstrated a correlation between nurse hours worked and burnout, with shift lengths of 10 hours or more leading to an overall increased likelihood of costly staff turnover.² As recruitment and retention of qualified providers to meet the demand for care becomes an ever increasing imperative across our state, the extended use of nurse overtime should not be relied upon as a long-term solution to meet this important workforce need. In applying a similar set of reasonable, evidenced-based limitations on nurse overtime that may be required in

¹ Rogers A, Hwang W, Scott L, Aiken L, Dinges, D (2004). The Working Hours of Hospital Staff Nurses and Patient Safety. *Health Affairs*, 2004; 23(4):202-212.

² Stimpfel A, Sloane D, Aiken L (2012). The Longer the Shifts For Hospital Nurses, The Higher The Levels Of Burnout And Patient Dissatisfaction, *Health Affairs*, 2012 Nov; 31(11): 2501–2509.



corrections facilities, HB 2230 seeks to bolster staff safety, retention and patient care in work settings where improvement of these outcomes should be viewed as a paramount objective.

For these reasons, **ONA urges your support for HB 2230.**