

February 23, 2019

Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum and members of the committee:

My name is Julie Ward. I am a master's prepared Registered Nurse with 14 years' nursing experience. For the past five years, I have held a fulltime nurse faculty position on one of Oregon Health and Science University's rural campuses. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 754, relating to an income tax credit for rural nurse faculty members.

As others have noted, the state of Oregon is challenged to supply sufficient new graduate nurses to meet the demands of our local communities. Recruitment and retention of qualified nurse faculty are significant limiting factors to meeting this demand. In every one of the five years that I have taught on the rural campus, we have experienced faculty turnover – in some years replacing and training-up as much as 25% of our faculty team. Financial necessity is almost always among the reasons cited for faculty departure. I, personally, accepted an annual pay cut of approximately 30% in deciding to transition from nursing practice to the nursing faculty role. I (and many of my colleagues) maintain a second job in an effort to make-up some of this difference. This is not the only source of financial strain I face. Each year, I spend several hundred dollars out of my own pocket to provide supplies and incentives in support of innovative teaching strategies. These payouts are unreimbursed and uncredited since, as a university educator, I am not eligible for the Educator Expense Deduction that is offered to instructors of K-12. Additionally, I spend an extra \$500 - \$600 each year on gas to travel from my metro-area residence to my rural-campus place of employment. This is also unreimbursed since it is my "choice" to live nearer schools, opportunities for secondary employment, preferred housing, and other urban conveniences.

I teach because I am passionate about the nursing profession, and I am inspired by students who are preparing to enter the field. It saddens and frustrates me to every year see similarly passionate and skilled nursing faculty leave education for very practical and justifiable financial reasons. A vote to introduce a tax credit to offset some of this burden is a vote in support of improved recruitment and retention of experienced and talented nurse educators, leading to a more sustainable supply of nurses across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring wider attention to this issue and thank you, in advance, for your support of SB754.

Sincerely,

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