



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

March 14th, 2019

Chair Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden, members of the committee,

For the record my name is Ethan Krow, representing SEIU Oregon State Council. Our members include licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists, radiologic technologists, nursing assistants, phlebotomists, laboratory assistants, customer service representatives, food service workers, housekeeping and many other healthcare classifications. On behalf of the more than 80,000 public and private sector workers represented by SEIU local 49 and 503, I'm here to testify in support HB 2447.

For many years SEIU both on the national and the state level has been advocating for affordable, quality healthcare for all. Our work has been guided by the conviction that regular access to quality health care is not just a privilege for those who can comfortably afford it, but a right for all. If access is limited, the economically disadvantaged so desperately needing both the physical care and the moral support are not only ignored, but their health issues dangerously worsen, which drives up the cost of health care for all, since neglected conditions require more intensive and prolonged treatment than if they are addressed at earlier stages.

SEIU 503 on a national and state level has also championed health care that will reign in escalating costs for both publicly subsidized and privately paid health care. We support strategies, operations and outcomes that put Oregonians first as consumers and taxpayers by creating the most cost-efficient system with the best possible results.

According to an article in the New York Times last year, the US spends, as a percentage of our economy, nearly two times as much on health care as other comparable countries - \$3.3 trillion in total, 17.9 percent of our 2016 GDP. This Committee has heard extensively this year about the escalating costs of pharmaceutical drugs, and that is just one part of our health care puzzle.

Oregonians deserve an opportunity to examine a better system, which would provide quality care to everyone in our state regardless of their income, profession or where they live. Thank you for your time, and we respectfully urge a yes vote on HB 2447.