



Testimony in Support of The Student Success Act

Joint Committee on Student Success

April 18, 2019

Chris Hewitt, Oregon Nurses Association

Co-Chairs Roblan and Smith Warner and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Student Success Act. My name is Chris Hewitt and I serve as the Deputy Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association. ONA represents over 15,000 nurses throughout the state, providing care in almost every setting of our health care sector imaginable—including staff nurses working in hospitals, public health clinics and school-based health centers.

ONA stands firmly in support of the Student Success Act because nurses inherently recognize that robust and equitable education is foundational to the overall health and prosperity of our state. We applaud this committee's work and the many advocates who have fought tirelessly to lift up the need for these important new investments in our state's education system. Numerous evidenced-based studies highlight that clinical care today only accounts for about 20 percent of overall health outcomes.¹ Relatedly, attainment of a high-quality education has long been inextricably linked as one of the most important social determinant factors of population health, with clear correlations to greater life-expectancy, reduced risk of chronic diseases and improvements in the use of preventative medical care.²

The Student Success Act would transform students' lives and strengthen Oregon's workforce. Corporations in our state continue to pay some of the lowest taxes in the nation, so we are heartened that the committee is proposing a broad-based corporate activities tax that will generate \$2 billion in new investments for our schools. With these upstream investments, our state can help all students get a healthier start early on in life through **providing vital resources like universal school lunches, more mental health counselors school nurses and adding back vital physical education programs.**

As a worker's organization, ONA is also glad to see that this proposal reflects the need for our state's many businesses who benefit greatly from Oregon's resources to share more fairly in the responsibility for these investments by increasing a tax that large corporations would pay, while providing a personal income tax cut to Oregon's individual taxpayers.

Our Association has long maintained a focus on how our state continue to expand its health care system so that every patient has meaningful universal access to high-quality care they can actually utilize. We believe the same philosophy should be a central focus for our public education system: Every student should have the essential resources needed to come to school prepared to learn when they access their education and with adequate supports throughout the process to best aid successful outcomes.

ONA strongly encourages your support for the Student Success Act.

Thank you.

¹ Journal of the American Academy of Nursing. "Putting 'health' in the electronic health record: a call for collective action." [https://www.nursingoutlook.org/article/S0029-6554\(15\)00257-2/fulltext](https://www.nursingoutlook.org/article/S0029-6554(15)00257-2/fulltext). Sept-Oct, 2015.

² The National Bureau of Economic Research. "The Effects of Education on Health". <https://www.nber.org/digest/mar07/w12352.html>