



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2847

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Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

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Good afternoon Chair Haas, Vice Chair Bentz and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association. We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The Oregon Nurses Association supports HB 2847, which would expand the list of rural hospitals eligible for provider tax credits.

The ONA and NPO support tax incentives that encourage providers, including both nursing and medical professionals, to practice in rural and underserved areas of the state. We believe that the challenges facing many residents in these communities, and the providers who wish to serve them, require additional resources. A tax incentive will be a step in the right direction, understanding that infrastructural resources must eventually be allocated so that providers and the communities they serve, have access to the technologies and best practices that are available in more urban parts of the state.

Our membership includes nursing providers ranging from entry level to advance degrees in nursing; they practice in every specialty area where nursing care has been established as essential to improving patient outcomes. We support HB 2847 because it would help address the financial disincentive our members, and their families, face when considering a relocation from a highly competitive urban market to rural one. It's a false choice that we believe our nurses and the communities that serve shouldn't have to struggle with. The current economic disincentive creates a restraint on trade practically speaking, if not legally constituted. We believe the State can make the choice of rural practice less difficult by correcting this inequity. HB 2847 helps to do just that.

As you are aware, the health status of a state's residents drives its economic success. If we are unable to support and maintain a healthy workforce, our economy fails. If we are not able to support communities in the prevention of infectious disease, we are all at risk of contagion. If we are not moving in a strategic direction to address the health needs of our more senior residents, who choose to retire to less populated areas in the state, we risk exacerbating the aging process and increasing their health care costs due to delayed assessment and treatment.

For these reasons, and many more, we support HB 2847 because it aligns with our mission to support quality care and healthy communities in the State of Oregon; we hope it aligns with your vision for the state, as well, and that you will fully fund the bill.