



Testimony in support of SB 557 and SB 706

Monday, March 8th, 2021

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Knopp and members of the committee:

My name is Kelly Campbell, and I am the Executive Director of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). I am here today to testify on behalf of our organization in support of both SB 557 and SB 706.

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Oregon PSR is a statewide organization of health professionals and public health advocates working for a healthy, just, and peaceful world for present and future generations. We represent more than 2,500 members across the state and are celebrating our 40th anniversary this year. Oregon PSR shared in the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to our international affiliate, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and are the local partner International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work to pass the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which has now entered into force. The Oregon legislature is on record supporting this treaty through Senate Joint Memorial 5 in 2019.

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Oregon PSR sees nuclear weapons as a major threat to public health, and works for nuclear justice, including justice for communities whose health has been impacted by nuclear weapons. Our friends from the COFA nations that are living in Oregon now are a community that has been devastatingly affected by the US testing of nuclear weapons in their homelands. We believe it is the obligation of the state of Oregon and the US as a whole to do everything in our power to support health equity for the people of the COFA nations.

When I first started getting to know people from the COFA community in Oregon, they invited me to their legislative day in Salem in March, 2019. As it was spring break, I had to bring my 10-year old with me and wasn't sure what to expect. Although we walked in as strangers, we were enthusiastically embraced by the dozens of COFA folks who had come from around the state to advocate for their legislative agenda, and to sing, laugh, and eat together. I was so glad that we attended, and so was my son after being offered his second piece of cake. I would urge you all, when in person gatherings are permitted again, to be sure to attend any event you are invited to by this community, and you will see what I mean about their warm welcome.

I would like to see the state of Oregon be as welcoming to the COFA community as they have been to me. SB 706 and SB 557 are small gestures of



welcome that can make a big difference. SB 706, the COFA Medicaid outreach bill, will provide the support that COFA community members need to navigate the Medicaid system and get the health care they deserve. SB 557 closes a loophole to insure that COFA members are able to get dental care.

Many COFA community members have moved to Oregon due to the devastating health effects that their community has suffered due to the US testing of nuclear weapons on their islands. Because of our nuclear testing, Marshallese people have some of the highest rates of cancer in the world, and yet they have no oncologist on their home islands. This month marks the 67th anniversary of the US testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands. While this may feel like ancient history, the people of the COFA nations are still paying the price for our actions. It is the least we can do to support their health care. I urge you to support SB 706 and SB 557.



Kelly Campbell
Executive Director

