

SUPPORT HB4106

February 4, 2022

Dear Business and Labor Committee members,

As an RN and someone who has worked in surgical settings for many years, I urge your support for HB4106.

It includes the changes that were negotiated at the end of the last session (but which LC couldn't complete in time for the worksession).

The bill is even more needed now than it was last year. The workforce crisis is getting worse in ASCs and Hospitals, and other professionals, especially nurses, are having to step down to complete tasks that should be filled by surgical technologists.

In rural and in urban areas alike, **the lack of workforce is delaying needed surgeries, negatively impacting patients and their health.**

HB4106 will allow us to train dozens of additional surgical techs, in communities throughout the state. As a reminder, the bill was drafted jointly with BOLI, which will run the program along with the Joint Committee, per ORS. It includes national accreditation, and strict safety standards (required both by the Joint Committee and by the national accreditation body).

As you recall, a Colorado based organization spread demonstrably false information, and submitted false statements in the Legislative record about the bill last session. We have worked for more than 6 months to set the record straight. The bill, Oregon standards, the Joint Committee by-laws, and BOLI/OHA regulations are very clear that an untrained individual cannot conduct surgery, and apprentices must meet basic and clear standards and be supervised before they can play any role in a surgical setting. These standards are no different than the current non-work based non-apprenticeship training program (which we leave fully intact).

This is a safe, proven, and effective way to ensure that we can fully and safely staff our operating rooms in urban and rural areas, and offer well paid careers to Oregonians who want to support their families.

Sincerely,

Kecia Norling, MBA/RN