

Dear Committee members,

My name is Michael Rosenthal, I'm a 38 year old ICU nurse with a degree in Political Science. But it should not take this background to see the avarice of our hospitals, and the public goodwill they abuse.

Yes, the public thinks that hospitals are inherently good, and it makes it politically difficult to oppose their interests. But time and again, from decrying full hospitals, when I see the problem is often not Covid but self-made, to pleading poverty, while having gigantic venture capital funds (see Providence New York Times article), I see perverted incentives in healthcare administration against the public weal.

We could leave all this out, and say, the simple fact here is supply and demand. If we need nurses, nurses will come into the field when they see the high wages of contracted nurses. You see this in nursing schools now. Wage caps have the opposite effect, worsening shortages.

Also, there is a reason there are not enough nurses. The job is utterly exhausting. I have been a commercial fisherman, waiter, landscaper, political staffer, and many other jobs and none of them come anywhere close to the absurd level of stress that hospital bedside nurses face on the job. It is inhuman and has been so before Covid.

The reason, is that hospitals are trying to squeeze every dollar they can out of each nurse. They are incentivized to pay them as little as possible, and hire as few as possible. Scarcity leads to ok wages, but they still hire as few as possible, leading to an utterly inhuman amount of work and stress. There is a very good reason many nurses are overweight. It is the stress.

This amount of stress is worth a lot of money. If they want to pay less, they would make the job more attractive. I work on the ICU units all over Portland, and nurses, on average, lament their job. I have worked in many other types of jobs, and have never seen such overburdened, stressed out and unhappy people,

sacrificing their health for their families. I am leaving bedside nursing as soon as I can for this reason. I have thought much about it and it is a very high wage that could conceivably keep me in this job. Exactly what hospitals are now fighting against.

Also, if you do this in Oregon, all these nurses will go to another state, and what effect do you think that will have on Oregon healthcare?

Think about doing something good for the people of Oregon, and for the love of god, don't listen to these disingenuous cries of poverty from hospitals. They can't even tell me how much my healthcare is going to cost, procedure to procedure. Do you really think they have such a solid and honest sense of their books? Why do our hospitals look like and are being built at the speed of modern Chinese Airports? How do they get this much money and plead poverty at the same time?

Now they want to strangle the incentives for people to get into nursing, stymie the new nursing workforce just as we struggle with an aging population. Who is going to take care of us when we are old? And will they be bitter, stressed, and unhealthy? Resentful that they have to take care of you? Or will they have the space to let empathy flourish, care about you, and honestly hold your hand as you are terrified?

Trust nurses or hospitals. The choice should be clear.

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