

02/08/2022

RE: SB 1549

Current Committee: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in opposition to SB 1549. I am a registered nurse at the Oregon Health Science University and a Wilsonville City Councilor. Still, I am not representing my employer or the City of Wilsonville, and these views are my own. I strongly oppose SB 1549 and believe that it will further exacerbate a crisis in staffing issues. This is a failed idea that has been attempted in other states that had to reverse course.

Yes, we have a severe nursing crisis. However, it is not due to contract-to-nurse, and it is often the contract nurses who fill the gaps when there is no one else to provide care. In large part, nurses are overwhelmed because of failed public policies and the COVID pandemic, leading to a nursing shortage.

Currently, contract nursing is paid 2x3 times more now than before the pandemic, and the increase in cost is due to the rise in labor cost. It has nothing to do with price gouging. This harmful bill will make it virtually impossible to recruit healthcare staff, and many talented nurses will leave the state if there is a rate cap. Nurses will go where the money is to our bordering states. As a nurse believe there are better solutions to address your serious staff needs, but this bill will negatively impact patient care and safety.

I urge a No vote!

Sincerely,

Ben West, RN BSN