

Submitter: Marion Anderson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1529

This is a sneaky complete rewrite of Senate Bill (SB) 1529. The original language of the bill was intended to allow ID verification to buy pseudoephedrine or ephedrine from pharmacies.

SB 1529 went through drastic changes in the Senate Healthcare Committee and retained none of its original language. It is now called SB 1529 A-Engrossed. The all-new language of the bill grants the head of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) power to declare a state of emergency. Section 1, lines 11-14 read:

“Health care emergency” means:

- A state of emergency declared under ORS 401.165;
- A state of public health emergency declared under ORS 433.441; or
- A determination by the Public Health Director that there exists a disease outbreak, epidemic or other condition of public health importance statewide or in a specified geographic area of this state.

There are no parameters set for what a disease outbreak means or what condition would warrant a matter of “public health importance.” This could mean we would all be required to mask every flu season or kids would be required to start virtual learning if someone in their school contracts a vaccine preventable disease such as the chicken pox. This is far too much power for one person to have.

The summary of the bill is deceptive by claiming the bill is something it is not. The new summary does not include any text about granting additional power to the director of the OHA. The summary of SB 1529 A-Engrossed reads:

Allows volunteer qualified health care providers to administer health care services in this state during health care emergency. Allows Public Health Director to direct and deploy volunteer health care providers during health care emergency. Requires Oregon Health Authority to provide workers’ compensation coverage for volunteer health care providers. Defines “health care emergency.”

Clarifies that certain contracts between pharmacies or pharmacists and pharmacy benefits managers are subject to specified requirements.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

The bill also does not define what is considered a state of emergency, how long the

emergency can last, or give anyone the ability to check the power of the OHA director (currently Patrick Allen). The public health director of the OHA is not an elected position. There is no way we the people could institute change through our legal system if this bill becomes law.

I DO NOT want an unelected official to have unchecked power over Oregonians, and therefore DO NOT want SB 1529 A-Engrossed to pass, and forgive me for saying, but none of you should either. It's not at all what's best for Oregonians.