

Submitter: Genevieve Baldwin RN

On Behalf Of: Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure HB2408

Good afternoon,

Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care and Chairman Nosse:

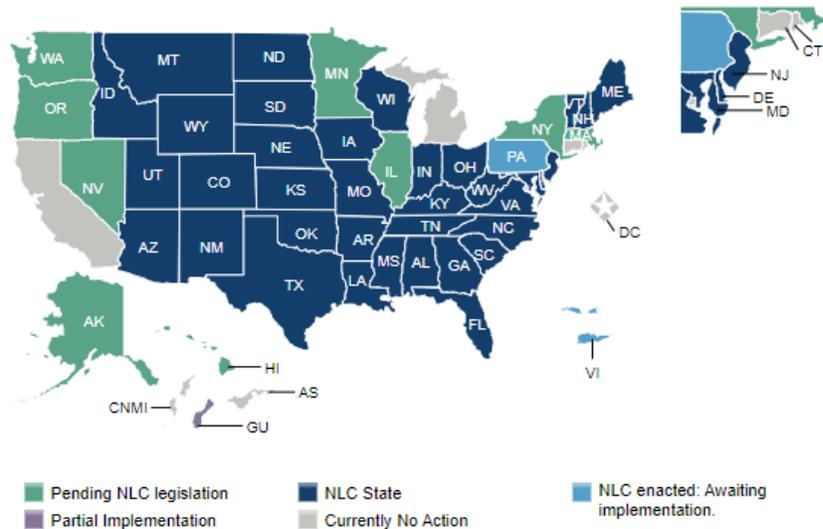
Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2408: Enacts Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) in Oregon.

As a former Staff Nurse for 10 years and Chief Nursing Officer, of twenty-seven years I support the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC).

Despite unrepresented nurse shortage in Oregon, Oregon along with 14 other states/jurisdictions do not participate in the multi-state NLC. The state is dependent on agency nurses or travel nurses to meet everyday staffing needs. Hospitals census is higher than ever, the patients are sicker than ever and are staying in hospitals longer. Though not the only strategy to improve the nursing shortage, by joining the NLC, nurse's living in other states could practice in Oregon without the delay and the cost of applying for an Oregon Nursing License. Attracting nurses from other NLC states may be easier as Oregon has the third highest pay in the nation, (Lynne Terry, the Lund report)

The Oregon State Board of Nursing in November 2022, surveyed Oregon nurses, with the following findings; 77% of Nurses surveyed by the Oregon State Board of Nursing stated multi-state license would be beneficial in their current practice role. 90% stated having a multi-state license would benefit their future health care careers. 91% of nurses responding to the survey were in favor of a multi-state nurse licensing, those opposed were 2%.

39 NLC Jurisdictions and Status



From the NLC website

Those against the NLC, specifically, Oregon Nurses Association, (ONA) state concerns of lack of sovereignty, regulation and public safety as reason to not vote to join the NLC. This may have been a

rational fear in the early years of the NLC. As other states have joined and faced these issues the principles and processes of the NLC have changed to meet early-on obstacles and concerns.

The compact has uniform licensing requirements and background checks performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Applicants must have a criminal background without any felony convictions, pleas or agreed dispositions, misdemeanors convictions are considered on a case by case basis. In addition, to obtain a multi-state license the applicant

- must meet the requirement for licensure in their home state.
- must have graduated from a program approved by authorized accrediting body
- passed the NCLEX exam
- hold an unencumbered license.
- must not be in an alternative program

One concern voiced by Gary Bruce in the Lund report was the NLC diluting state licensing standards. Oregon's Licensing Standard require working 900 hours in 5 years and a one-time pain management continuing education of 7 hours. In response to this concern, some states also require practice hours, though many more states require more continuing education than Oregon, for licensure renewal. Though not intended, this may be a step in the beginning of standardization of nurse licensure across the United States.

Nurses naming Oregon as a home state would still report to and be under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Board of Nursing policies and procedures when practicing in Oregon. Nurses from party states are required to adhere to each state's laws and the state's nurse practice act. Oregon may take disciplinary action against a nurse privilege to practice when they violate Oregon laws or the Oregon Nurse Practice Act.

Employers must query Nursys, the National Licensure and Disciplinary Database, an automated license status data bank, accessible to review nurse licensure information such as the applicant's current licensure status, previous disciplinary actions, current participation in an alternative program and current significant investigations. This system is currently used by the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN).

In summary, Oregon is in dire straits to provide enough nurses to care for our population. The NLC maybe another tool in the toolbox to mitigate some of the nursing shortages. The emergency licensure during the pandemic, may give a glimpse of what it will be like to join the NLC. One thing is clear, nurses are working longer hours, with sicker patients and less support than in previous years, this is a recipe for medical errors to occur.