

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of Healthcare Workforce Pipeline Package

February 22, 2023

Thank you, Chair Nosse, and members of the committee. For the record, I am Travis Nelson – the State Representative for House District 44, and I am a Registered Nurse. Committee members, I am here today in support of the concepts behind House Bills 2744, 2926, and 2928. We, the members of the legislature, need to address the entirety of the nursing workforce pipeline to help to alleviate the burden on our burned out and overworked nurses.

These bills are a starting point for how the state of Oregon can intervene in addressing the current issues with workforce in our health care facilities. We are in a nursing pipeline crisis, with ramifications through the continuum of health care. We need a multi-faceted approach with a scope that covers the beginning, middle, and end stages of workforce recruitment and retention.

Starting at the beginning of the pipeline, we need to address recruiting and retaining nurse educators. The nursing faculty shortage is one of the biggest clogs in the nursing pipeline. We can only bring in as many new nurses as can be trained, which is difficult when nursing instructors have to take a pay cut when leaving the bedside to teach. Currently, new graduate nurses from two-year Associate's programs often make more after graduation than their professors and instructors with Master's and Doctorate degrees.

The next step in the education-to-workforce pipeline is clinical placements for nursing students. I believe we need to incentivize both hospitals and educational institutions to increase more clinical placements with a variety of times to meet the needs of nursing students.

Finally, we need incentives for nursing students to work in Oregon health care facilities. Once we have trained the next generation of nurses, we must keep them in Oregon's hospitals and health care facilities. This work will help in reducing the exorbitant cost related to staffing with temporary nurses.

This said, we must meaningfully address staffing issues to increase healthcare worker satisfaction and maximize the impact of these measures. I am committed to working with Representative Goodwin, the hospital association, and labor to find solutions to help to our burned-out workforce who so desperately want change at all levels of the recruitment and training process. I encourage you to support investments that will address short- and long-term solutions to our health care workforce crisis. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Travis Nelson".

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland