

Submitter: Stephanie Brown

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

My name is Stephanie Brown, and I have been a med-surg hospital nurse in Oregon for over 17 years. I recently transferred to a plastic surgery clinic because the staffing situation in the hospitals became untenable. I would dread going in to work, not knowing if this was going to be another 12 hours of working with more patients than I should have, another 12 hours with acuity that was unsustainable. We were short at least one CNA a majority of my shifts. Nurses doubled up patients to cover each others breaks for four hours in a 24 hour period because the charge nurse was unable to cover them and break nurse coverage is too low or nonexistent. I imagine being a patient, wondering why my care was half of what it should be for four hours of every day, not knowing that it was because my nurse had a double assignment. Patients deserve better than that. My heart breaks that I had to give up a specialty that I love, but I can not give the care that made me proud to be a nurse under the current conditions.

My job was especially difficult because our cardiac surveillance techs, transport team, phlebotomists, care coordinators, and physical therapists were also short. Nurses become expected to pick up all those specialized roles. Some of those we aren't trained for, and taking on so many extra tasks means there is less time for nursing tasks.

We need laws to protect the people of Oregon. We need laws to ensure good health care for all of us.