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RE: RN Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Grace Schoenlank and I am a nurse at *OHSU* in the *Labor and Delivery and Mother Baby Units*.

I learned about the high burnout rate of new nurses when I was in nursing school. We had classes dedicated to learning self-care strategies for defying the statistics. I was sure I'd be different, that my passion for the work would compensate for the tough times ahead. Now, nearly two years into my career, all I want to do is decrease the amount of time I'm at work. I spend my off time recovering from work; resting, talking about experiences of trauma in therapy, going to the chiropractor to deal with chronic pain from overwork. I feel burnt out from chronic workplace stress. I see this pattern play out in my colleagues who have been on the unit for much longer than me and throughout the hospital.

The work environment for nurses at OHSU is unsafe. We are regularly understaffed because administrators refuse to approve the additional positions we need to staff to our clinical guidelines and safe staffing plan. We often do not have enough staff to ensure we get our breaks, which is incredibly dangerous for nurses and even more so for our patients.

We need adequately, intelligently staffed units if we have any chance of retaining nurses. This is a chance to create a sustainable plan for nursing in Oregon for the foreseeable future, not just this current fiscal cycle.

HB 2697 seeks to require safe minimum nurse staffing and enforcement of legally required rest and meal breaks. The nursing crisis is not that we don't have enough nurses. The crisis is that we don't have enough nurses who are willing to work in these conditions.

We need HB 2697.

Sincerely,

Grace Schoenlank, RN, BSN