

Submitter: C Vanginkel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Greetings,

I am writing to you in support of HB 2697. I am an ICU nurse working at OHSU in Portland and have been challenged by our ongoing staffing issues and need for adequate help.

The work environment for nurses at my hospital has become increasingly dire over the last few years. We are regularly understaffed and consequently, are unable to provide overextended healthcare workers time to eat, go to the bathroom, or just take a moment for themselves. Working long shifts of 12 hours or more, without a break or a lunch, is exhausting and, quite frankly, dangerous for both nurses and patients. Nurses are burning out and patients are receiving sub-optimal care.

Oregon has had a staffing shortage long before the pandemic. Now the added stress and uncertainty of COVID 19 has made staffing issues worse. Oregon is on the verge of a full-blown crisis as more overworked and undervalued healthcare workers leave the bedside in search of safer and better working conditions. We have been asking our hospital for help for more than a decade, and we have not gotten it. HB 2697 seeks to address many of the root causes of this crisis including requiring minimum safe nurse staffing and enforcement of legally required rest and meal breaks. The problem in Oregon is not that we don't have enough nurses. The problem is we don't have enough nurses who are willing to work in these conditions. Please, help nurses and our patients by passing HB 2697.