

Submitter: Jonathon Baker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

As someone who has great stake and passion for the effectiveness and safety of the health care delivery system in the state of Oregon, I'm excited to offer my written testimony in support of HB 2697. We've seen over the course of recent decades the progressive erosion of our healthcare system(s) in Oregon. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated an already troubled system, we fear another like tragedy would push our state over the brink. As a collective, we're all responsible for ensuring the health and well being of our communities. The passage of this legislation would be a giant step in the right direction towards ensuring safe staffing and the protection of both patients, nurses, and healthcare workers. Assuredly, there is not a lack of nurses and health professionals in our state, rather a lack of those willing to work under the current conditions they too often find themselves in. This bill will work to correct such conditions and encourage their safe reentry to the workforce.

The reality remains this, our patients deserve the very best, our health professionals deserve the very best, and our communities deserve the same. But that's not what they're currently receiving. We have tried for years to work through this staffing crisis under existing statute(s) to no avail. It's clear that current enforcement and healthcare staffing laws are not enough to ensure the safe delivery of healthcare in Oregon. Our health professionals have done their part, they've consistently sacrificed their personal lives, safety, freedom, comfort, and mental health to go above and beyond to provide the care they envisioned when they first entered the field. However, they're not being supported by hospital systems, especially those who claim to be non-profit, claiming only to be operating to the benefit of our communities, but fall short on an all too common basis.

Simply stated, this bill is about health, safety, and providing people the freedom of living in health. It is not a perfect resolution, and truth being told, will not resolve our broken system altogether or on a stand alone basis. But passage will send a signal to the people (your constituents) that their legislative bodies care for them and their families. That we're moving in the right direction, and that the nurses and health professionals coined "heroes" during the pandemic are actually being treated as such. The vast majority of people don't realize the critical state of our healthcare system in Oregon until they have to experience it first hand, either directly or indirectly through the experience(s) of loved ones. This legislation will ensure those troubling experiences will dwindle before we, possibly even ourselves, have to experience them when in a state of crisis. Oregonians deserve better, our families and children deserve better. I urge you now more than ever, to pass HB 2697 and enshrine it in law. So, tomorrow may be brighter than today.

Respectfully,
Jonathon Baker