



February 28, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

From: Matt Calzia, BSN, RN, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: In Support of Senate Bill 849

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and esteemed members of the committee:

My name is Matt Calzia, I am the Director of Practice and Professional Development of the Oregon Nurses Association. I have been a licensed registered nurse in Oregon since 2011 and my assessment of the current situation is that Oregon must invest in the development of the state's healthcare workforce.

Senate Bill 849 (SB 849) provides critically needed funding for programs that will help with near- and long-term healthcare workforce development. Oregon has an aging population that will demand more from every sector in healthcare for decades to come. To meet this need, Oregon must support programs that remove barriers to entry experienced by immigrant and refugee workers.

SB 849 will provide grants that enable proven programs, such as the Workforce Improvement with Immigrant Nurses (WIIN), to be reinstated to the benefit of all Oregonians. Oregonians will continue to become more diverse, and we need programs in place that support a healthcare workforce that reflects that diversity and delivers culturally competent care to all communities. Removing barriers to practice, such as arbitrary time limits and redundant English proficiency exams, will provide a diverse workforce for diverse population. SB 849 is one step to a more equitable and accessible healthcare system.

ONA supports SB 849 because it is a sound investment in Oregon's workforce, especially the healthcare workforce. This legislation is needed to address urgent needs in a manner that is sustainable and equitable.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

Best regards,

Matt Calzia, BSN, RN

Director of Nursing Practice and Professional Development

Oregon Nurses Association