

Submitter: Chris Rompala

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Support for House Bill 2697

Good evening. My name is Chris Rompala and I am urging you to support House Bill 2697. I am a staff nurse and work for a large hospital in Springfield. Today I am speaking on behalf of the 1100 nurses I work with. I work in the operating room where I have one patient at a time due to strict ratios in my specialty.

My hospital, as with many others in the state, currently have staffing plans based on patient ratios like those in this bill, but the hospitals continue to ignore them. Now, we are being pushed to create staffing plans based on budget, not actual patient needs. While nurses are already at a breaking point, the medical center is asking them to take on higher patient ratios and this added pressure keeps coming down on the nurse. Yet, we just keep taking care for our patients, because they need us and it's what nurses do. This work environment is what has created the hundreds of nursing vacancies at my facility. It isn't due to a lack of nurses in Oregon, we have data that shows how many licensed nurses there are, it's because nurses can't continue to bear the burden the medical centers are putting on us. We are breaking.

While I feel that I'm in a position of being able to provide the care my patients need and deserve, we have nurses throughout the hospital that aren't. Every day they show up to work knowing they might not be able to meet their patient's needs. Could you imagine what it feels like to be proficient and competent at a job that you love, yet not have the ability to be your best because you are continually being pushed by your employer to do more and more? Do you know how demoralizing and crushing it is to know that every time you go to work, you're going to be able to do just enough and not what you know you are capable of?

Now is the time for you to provide us the support we need. We have used all the tools we have, and we are now asking for your help. The hospital systems and hospital association have failed us. We need a nurse staffing law that has some bite behind it. We deserve this, as do you and your families. Thank you.