

Submitter: Hailey Staiger

On Behalf Of: Myself and my colleagues

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2665

Healthcare workers deserve a living wage. We live in a capitalist society; let the market determine wages just like it does in every other industry. What other professions have their salaries limited by the government? If nursing was a male-dominated profession, would this proposed bill exist?

Facilities are losing their staff because they don't pay their staff enough. Period. They wouldn't have staffing shortages, and thus a need for staffing agencies, if they just paid their nursing staff a living wage. I have seen my friends and colleagues regularly work 16+ hour shifts, 60+ hours/week as facility staff, just to have enough to provide for their families. Their other option is to work for an agency and make enough money in a 40 hour work week that they can actually spend time with the family they're providing for.

If this bill passes, even more people will leave the profession. I've been a CNA in the skilled nursing field for the past 18 months and I plan to attend nursing school. I loved the last facility I worked at; I loved my residents, coworkers, and management. My one-year raise was \$0.54 and that was more than most of my coworkers. The cost of living in Portland is rising much faster than an extra \$0.54 an hour. That's why I quit and started working for an agency full time. Now I can afford my bills and save up for nursing school. But if this bill passes, I will probably abandon healthcare and pursue a different career. Why would I enter a profession that comes with a pre-set salary cap? Hospitals and nursing homes will always underpay us and agencies will always pay more. Profit is their priority.

Would you stay at your job if the government cut your wage?