

March 22, 2023
Senate Committee on Health Care
2023 Oregon Legislature

My name is Jody Caprino, a resident of South Salem and a Paramedic for over 28 years in the Portland Metropolitan area. I strongly oppose SB60 which would lower the education requirements for Paramedics in the state of Oregon.

The Paramedics in Oregon are highly skilled, well educated, with expansive patient treatment protocols that other states would hold in high esteem. The professional Paramedics in this state have worked long and hard to improve our prominence in the health care community as well as our living wages and benefits. This bill would undermine all that we have fought so hard for. This bill if passed, could potentially impact private ambulance Paramedics the greatest. This group of professionals have overcome so much over the years as far as low paying jobs and benefits, with high turnover rates. Low paying wages and benefits create low retention and recruitment. This bill could potentially create harm directly to the unionized workforce in labor disputes.

There is a healthcare and trade job shortage across the country, including EMS. Solutions to this problem is not decreasing the educational standards. Other answers could be EMS incentive grant programs to increase retention and recruitment, awarding grants to community colleges to develop and support training programs for EMS. Provide funding to public schools for development of educational programs for EMS related curriculum. Establish EMS providers as part of the Oregon Rural Practitioner Tax Credit Program, not only as volunteers yet as paid EMS professionals and increase those tax credit limits to recruit rural providers.

Let us look for the answer broadly, not with this short sighted haphazard bill with everlasting consequences. This will not improve the staffing shortage, in fact it may just exacerbate it in the long run.

Thank you to the Committee on Health Care for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Jody Caprino