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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB60

My name is Casey Marr and I support Senate Bill 60. Sadly, the associate degree requirement is detrimental to Eastern Oregon and its rural communities. Instead of being able to hire experienced providers that are from Idaho and other surrounding states with no associates degree, they must go in great lengths and hope to find someone that can fit the requirements Oregon demands.

You will hear those who oppose the bill make statements like "the associates degree is needed because it provides basic math, health and wellness, and literature courses". Does Oregon not teach basic math, health and wellness, and literature courses throughout grade school? If an associates degree is so important to becoming a better provider, why can one fulfill this requirement by getting a associates degree in underwater basket weaving or another non medical related degree instead of being required to obtain a degree that is in the medical field? If there is evidence that having a associates degree results in a individual becoming a better provider, then why is Oregon one of the only states that require it? If having a degree does result in a individual becoming a better provider, why does the Unities States Armed Forces allow their paramedics to be enlisted with no degree instead of making it a career field for commissioned officers? That is a simple answer, that is because the curriculum that military follows goes above and beyond what is required at a national level. Rural communities in Eastern Oregon are also severely impacted by the lack of available paramedic programs. The last Paramedic program hosted by Treasure Valley Community College according to TVCC was in the 1990s and they state they have no current plans to install program at TVCC in the near future. There is a online program hosted by Chemeketa Community College, however, the labs for this program require students to travel to Pendleton, which is a roughly 3 hour drive and to Salem, which is roughly a 7 hour drive for some students. Those students that are currently employed as EMS providers and taking this program are being burnt out due to these distances they must travel along with the hours they work each week which studies has show can result in a decrease of care provided. Oregon has the Intermediate EMT licensure due to the lack of paramedic programs in rural communities, however, even then there is a extremely low amount of EMT-I providers and EMT-I courses available in those areas.

You are going to hear numerous individuals from colleges and unions who are against Senate Bill 60, and why is that? One word, money. Colleges would lose money from those individuals who would enroll in associate degree programs if Senate Bill 60 were passed. So naturally they would be against it. Also, unions would lose the ability to use the associate degree as a bargaining tool against cities and

employers.

Instead of requiring an associate degree, maybe it is time for Oregon to reevaluate its paramedic curriculum and go above and beyond what is required at the national level.