

Submitter: Nicholas Stafford  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB60

My Name is Nicholas Stafford. I've been a paramedic for 4 years. I work in an urban transporting agency where we are short staffed, and have been for several years.

This debate about the education requirement is not new. The acute shortage of paramedics that the nation is experiencing, is long in the making, and is absolutely not unique to Oregon — despite what some proponents of this bill would argue.

The proponents of this bill would have you believe that high educational standards are directly responsible for this short staffing, but this conclusion is both incorrect, and a red-herring; it does not address the fundamental reasons that too few people are not choosing Paramedicine as a viable career.

The aspects of every job that can be considered a career worth pursuing, are all roughly the same:

1. reasonable pay that matches living expenses
2. reasonable working conditions, and
3. a retirement plan that makes retiring from that career feasible.

Taking away education requirements just might allow some paramedics to come from Idaho and work in rural Oregon. But lowering the education require has a cost, as well.

A bill addressing the fundamental reasons that intelligent, hard working, and dedicated professionals choose either to step away from a career as a paramedic, or to not enter the field in the first place, would go a long way towards addressing the shortages that both urban and rural EMS systems face. Lowering the standards for education, however, addresses none of those fundamental concerns. I strongly urge you to vote against this bill.

Let's use our collective energy and come up with a more durable solution to this problem.