



Good morning Co-chairs Valderrama, Campos and members of the Joint Subcommittee On Human Services,

My name is Odalis Aguilar Aguilar and I am a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME. We represent over 33,000 workers in the public and private sector. Our members work for the State of Oregon in addition to counties, municipalities and behavioral health nonprofits across Oregon as well as self-employed child care providers. About 270 of our members are Mental Health Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners at the Oregon State Hospital.

Oregon AFSCME supports HB 5525 which would allow the continuation of services at the State Hospital and would ensure we have the resources needed to make sure we're able to retain and recruit staff. I want to direct your attention to the testimonies submitted from our members that highlight the working conditions they face and how many are at their breaking point. Our members have been working under a Letter of Agreement since 2021 and is set to expire at the end of this month. This LOA offers extra pay for working excessive overtime as an incentive to retain folks due to the lack of adequate staffing at the Hospital.

Our members are dedicated to providing high quality care for patients who need it the most and want to continue working despite an environment of high risk and high stress. Most of them who submitted written wanted to share their story with their own voice but are unable to due to the staffing crisis.

For example, one of them notes that *"We have broken records for admissions in the last year. In one week the two of us did 47 admissions, in one month 149, and since the Mosman order came into effect in September 2022 the two of us have done well over 650 admissions"*

Another says, *"We don't have enough Nurses to care for our patients as it is, and those of us that are here are tired of having to work short-staffed or getting mandated because they can't find another nurse to relieve us. One of our Nurses ended up being mandated for 11 hours past her regular 10-hour shift because they could not find another nurse to relieve her."*

We know that our members and other folks who also work at the State Hospital want to help and care for those in need so that they can reintegrate into their communities with the skills they need to be successful. Like at any other hospital, the workers want to provide quality care to their patients. They are giving everything that they can to keep up with their workloads but can't do that if they consistently have to cover mandated hours. We support this budget but also ask that you engage in productive conversations with us to ensure we have the staffing to provide aid to those in need.