



March 30, 2023

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

For the record, my name is David Lynch, I am the President of AFSCME Local 3295, the Oregon State Hospital Nurses. I've been with the state hospital for 12 years and am part of a big OSH family that's doing the best it can to help our patients to get the resources and help they need. I want to share my full support for HB 2701 with the -3 amendment which creates a new "high risk/high stress" category within PERS for employees of the Oregon State Hospital who have direct contact with patients and 911 operators who directly work with or manage emergency or traumatic events in the regular course of work.

The work we perform at OSH is unique and comes with its own challenges. We care about our patients and want to show up for them in every way that we can to make sure they learn the necessary skills in order to reintegrate them into their communities. There are countless stories about workers being injured while on the job due to outbreaks from patients due to their behavioral issues, yet, many of these workers return to their jobs and show up for patients. Our jobs are not easy and without many incentives, I can see why recruitment is difficult.

HB 2701 with the -3 amendments could help with these efforts. By creating this new category for OSH and 911 telecommunicators, we could attract folks into the workforce who engage 24/7 in work that is high risk and causes high stress. In the Oregon Occupational Injury and Illness Survey Summary, Table, and Appendices for Calendar Year 2021, OSH has the highest incidence of occupational injuries and illnesses of any industry in Oregon.

Our counterparts at the Stabilization and Crisis Units who provide care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), often with co-occurring mental health issues in group homes that also seek to stabilize and transition folks to lower level of care with the goal of reintegrating them into community-based settings already receive PERS benefits and we believe that the work we perform is adjacent and should be compensated as such.

I strongly urge your support and appreciate your consideration for this bill. HB 2701 with the -3 amendment would not only help recruit new people into this field, but it would also retain workers who feel burnt out. My co-workers and I have shown up through the last couple of years and the pandemic has exacerbated the staffing crisis. This bill would not only be a boost of morale, but it would also make us feel seen and heard.

Thank you for your time,

David Lynch