



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

My name is Cathie Krahenbuhl, and I work as a registered nurse at Oregon State Hospital -- close to 19 years. Before becoming a registered nurse, as a young adult, I served my Country as a military police officer in the Army. Afterwards, I mostly worked in corrections as a Sheriff's deputy in Idaho Falls, Idaho and corrections officer at Shutter Creek here in Oregon. I was motivated to become a nurse because I care about people, and I also wanted a job in which I could make enough money to send my kids to college. I am writing in support for HB 2701 with the -3 amendments as written.

I took a job at Oregon State Hospital because I naturally have a knack and ability to work well with individuals who might be described as difficult (patients with psychiatric disabilities and personality disorder.) The best part of my job is to see a person get better mentally and emotionally and then discharge from the hospital to live in the community. After years on higher acuity units, I took a position on a transition unit, Bridge 1 (BG1) and have remained there since 2011. Historically BG1's patient population is generally displayed as safe, stable, and community transition ready behavior however, throughout the years there have been occasional acts of violence. One incident was so brutal my co-worker, Pete, was never able to return to work and the rest of us have been left emotionally traumatized.

During recent years, BG1 has had an influx of .370 patients, those who have been accused of a crime and are unable to participate in their own defense; therefore BG1 now regularly receives patients who are less stable. In this past year alone, I have been shoved into a wall, physically postured on, and verbally menaced with threats violence against me and others.

I have an ability to detect when a person is headed towards becoming violent, yet unfortunately, even if I inform management that a patient is headed towards violence, it is difficult to move these individuals to a higher security unit before violence occurs. Due to this kind of stress, I often come to work sleep deprived because I just can not sleep after some of the things that happen at work. I often ask myself how much longer I can continue. I joke with coworkers that they will probably find me dead on the toilet someday at work.

Myself and many of my coworkers on BG1 are older. I have a constant nagging worry that we might be injured too badly to continue to work and will not be able to financially support ourselves and families. We also joke about how it is not safe to retire because so many co-workers die after retiring from Oregon State Hospital.

HB 2701 would create a new "high risk/high stress" category in PERS for OSH employees and 911 operators, allowing them to retire earlier with full benefits, as well as receive an increase in



their final average salary. It also lowers the age for OSH workers and 911 operators related to when Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan (OPSRP workers) can retire with full benefits from 65 to the later of either 60 years old or 5 years of service.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this bill and I hope you vote yes on HB 2701.

Cathie Krahenbuhl