

Submitter: Lisa Rye

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: SB703

I am writing in opposition to S.B. 703.

As a Program Director and Instructor for Nursing Assistants in Oregon I recognize the extra issues that students that do not speak English as their primary language have with state testing. I appreciate the work that was done last year to try and go through the current test bank to check for words or terms that would put language learners at a significant disadvantage. I recognize that there is not yet enough information to measure how successful this has been.

At Mount Hood Community College we have a program that provides additional support for students that do not have English as a primary language. In the time that I have known about this bill, I have asked two different classes if they thought this would benefit them. We generally have people who speak several languages although the students I discussed this with were Spanish speakers. They unanimously said they did not think it would be helpful. I had a conversation with one of the ESL Instructors about the information

These are the reasons they gave:

- They learned the information in English and they felt for this reason, they would not always know the “medical term” in their primary language.
- They stated that they felt that they were going to be working in English and having the test in another language would not benefit their ability to work in Healthcare.
- There was also discussion about the number of students who do not speak Spanish and would not be able to benefit from this bill.

I then asked if they thought there was something that might be helpful for and the idea that we came up with is possibly being able to use a translation dictionary for the written portion of the test. This would allow them to look up a word that they do not understand while still utilizing the questions as they are currently written.

I am also very concerned that a bill could change how testing is done without discussion with the Instructors and Program Directors that are responsible for the education of the students. We just completed a lengthy process of revising the NA 1 curriculum to simplify what is taught and to reduce the amount of time needed to complete the training. Those changes are set to take place August 1st of this year. I feel that adding another large change that was not studied and discussed with the people who are responsible for the education of the students will not benefit Oregon and the students we support.

Lisa Rye

Program Director

Mount Hood Community College