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District 34



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Senate Health Care Committee
April 26, 2023

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee, thank you for considering this important bill.

I serve as State Representative for House District 34, and am submitting my testimony as Chief Sponsor in support of HB 2600. In addition to my work in the legislature, I also work as a pediatrician serving children in Washington County.

I come before you today in support of HB 2600, which would change the guidelines by which the Governor makes appointments to the Oregon State Board of Nursing. If you've looked at the bill, you've seen that it's quite short. This is, indeed, a simple fix – but one that can and will have a big positive impact.

This bill would require that the Governor take the entire continuum of care into consideration when appointing members to the board. Currently, the board is made up primarily of hospital-based nurses. While these nurses are a vital part of Oregon's healthcare sector, they do not represent the full spectrum of nurses throughout our state, who work in long-term care facilities or a clinic, such as the one I practice pediatrics. This is a real issue, since many rules and policies adopted by the board affect hospital-based and long-term-care nurses differently. All affected parties should have a voice at the decision-making table. In addition, as Oregon's population ages and the acuity of patients rise, nursing services in long term care settings have become increasingly important – yet are still underrepresented in rulemaking and decision-making processes, doing a disservice to both them and their patients.

Statute already requires that the Governor consider representation according to ethnic group and geographic areas of the state: this bill would simply add a third consideration for care setting where the member practices. And let me be clear – this bill does not expand the board, nor does it impose any mandates or additional powers or restrictions on the Board. It simply instructs the Governor to make this consideration in her appointment process.

Ensuring that our governing bodies accurately represent the people they serve is crucial to a functioning, democratic society. You have an opportunity to further this mission by passing HB 2600, ensuring that nurses throughout our state, and the Oregonians whom they serve, have rules and policies that take their unique experiences into account. This is a simple fix, and is the right thing to do for our state. This bill passed unanimously out of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care and unanimously off the House Floor. I urge you to continue this trend and support HB 2600.

Thank you.

Lisa Reynolds