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TO: House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee

FROM: Paul Smith, PhD, RN, CNE
Dean & Professor, Linfield University Good Samaritan School of Nursing

DATE: February 5, 2024

RE: Endorsement for HB 4011 sections 27 and 28 related to nurse educators

Dear Chairs and Members of the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee:

I trust this correspondence finds you in good health and high spirits. As the current Nursing Dean at Linfield University Good Samaritan School of Nursing, representing our institution, which is a proud member of the Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities (OAICU), I write to you with the utmost enthusiasm to express our endorsement of House Bill 4011.

The proposed Retaining and Elevating the Nurse Educator Workforce (RENEW) initiative, under the auspices of the Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN), seeks to address the pressing issue of stabilizing and augmenting the nursing faculty in the state of Oregon. This initiative holds great promise in assisting our state in meeting the growing demands of the nursing workforce.

Linfield University, as a private institution, plays a vital role in preparing and graduating a significant number of pre-licensure nursing students annually. We proudly contribute to the healthcare profession within Oregon, graduating approximately 250 students per academic year. Presently, we enroll approximately 425 full-time students in our pre-licensure programs, and it is imperative that we have the necessary support to ensure a robust nursing workforce in the state.

I firmly believe that the passage of HB 4011 will be instrumental in addressing the ongoing nursing shortage in Oregon and alleviating the concurrent faculty shortage experienced by many schools of nursing. Key points supporting our endorsement of HB 4011 include:

1. **Assistance in Faculty Recruitment and Clinical Placements:** The bill has the potential to aid in the recruitment of qualified nursing faculty and facilitate the identification of suitable clinical placements for all nursing programs in Oregon, including our own.

2. **Wage Discrepancy and Faculty Retention:** A crucial aspect highlighted by the Oregon Longitudinal Data Collaborative's "Addressing the Nursing Shortage in Oregon" draft report is the wage gap between nursing faculty and nurse practitioners. HB 4011 could play a pivotal role in addressing this gap, contributing to improved faculty retention.
3. **Articulation Agreements and Seamless Transitions:** Institutions like Linfield, in collaboration with OAICU member institutions, maintain articulation agreements with community college programs. HB 4011 has the potential to further support these agreements, ensuring smooth transitions for students pursuing their BSN after completing their ADN.

We extend our gratitude for the commendable work you are undertaking to develop evidence-based strategies addressing the complexities of the nursing pipeline and workforce needs in our state. Your support for House Bill 4011 is crucial in ensuring a resilient and flourishing nursing workforce that meets the evolving healthcare demands in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Smith, PhD, RN, CNE
Dean and Professor
Linfield University Good Samaritan School of Nursing