



February 5, 2024,

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 Robert Davidson, and I'm a member of AFSCME Local 3295, the Oregon State Hospital Nurses. I write to you today to share my full support for HB 4045 and urge your support on this important issue. This bill creates a new "Hazardous" 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. This bill has various components but I want to shed light on one specific portion which directly impacts the life of my coworkers who are also your state employees.

I work with acutely mentally ill patients 10 hours per day running the ward, administering medications, and helping patients get their needs met. I am always on edge, and the constant stress makes me want to find another job. It takes one day to recover from a week of work. During that time I do not feel like doing anything. I know I am not alone on this and know that HB 4045 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,

Robert Davidson