



February 6, 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 Tiffany Slover, and I'm a member of AFSCME Local 3295, the Oregon State Hospital Nurses. I am writing to share my support for HB 4045. 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.

As a lead Registered Nurse (RN) at OSH, I am responsible for managing altercations between patients in the safest way possible. Unfortunately, some of these conflicts escalate to physical violence, which can be extremely distressing and taxing for the staff involved. Due to the lack of sufficient personnel, staff members often have to wait for responders to arrive before they can intervene in violent situations. This feeling of helplessness is compounded by the fact that staff members themselves are sometimes the target of verbal and physical violence. It is disheartening to feel like we are not equipped to defend ourselves and our colleagues.

I have been physically assaulted twice while on duty at the Oregon State Hospital. These incidents have resulted in concussions, which have permanently impacted my cognitive function. I now experience short-term memory issues, persistent migraines, and word-finding difficulties, which significantly impact my daily life. The fear of being assaulted again is a constant source of stress.

Overall, staff members do not feel like their safety is a priority, and the constant struggle to maintain safety without adequate support and resources is exhausting. HB 4045 could help address these traumatic issues. By creating this new category for OSH and 911 telecommunicators, we could attract folks into the workforce who engage 24/7 in work that is high-risk and causes high stress.

This is highly needed and would help retain workers across the state. Please pass HB 4045.

Thank you for your time,

Tiffany Slover