



Support for HB 4089

February 13, 2024

To: Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Committee Members

From: Paige Spence, Director of Government Relations, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for HB 4089

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 4089 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a professional association and labor union representing over 17,000 nurses and healthcare professionals across Oregon.

We are glad to have Representative Nelson's work on this House Bill 4089, which does three things in the hospital context:

- New rules in hospital financial transparency
- Raises pay for the hours a nursing staff member spends on standby, or on-call, to the applicable minimum wage
- Predictable scheduling, with a 14-day notice time to nursing staff of a work schedule they can rely on, with exceptions of emergency circumstances and changes agreed to by the worker

I would like to speak to the latter two points, from what we've heard members say would solve a problem.

Standby pay is a fraction of the minimum wage. For a lot of our members it's a few dollars an hour. For what's asked of a nurse in being on-call, this is an exploitive pay that sets a nurse back, if they have a lot of call particularly over a whole career.

We would say it's a dodge of staffing costs to arrange a department with a lot of call, where the workers are asked to bear the brunt, as our member Vonda Abbe spoke to, in her example of working in a department that doesn't run a regular night or weekend shift.

But we have access to care problems in this state. Patients deserve better than when they need something urgent or emergent, you hope the team that is on-call rushes over quickly – or, the

approach where they are transferred to a distant hospital, to be seen far outside their community. Rather than this, a hospital can look at where they can create regular shifts, mixed with an amount of call that treats workers fairly.

Second, predictable scheduling now has a firm tradition in gains we've made in Oregon law but some of the places where it hurts the most that we *haven't* applied predictable scheduling are in health care. When you look at on-call workers for hospitals – with the flexibility that's required of that arrangement on the employee side – and then add in irregular schedules and late-notice schedules, it makes it nightmarish. Predictable scheduling for these workers, for members like ours, is a piece of the puzzle to keep a stable workforce.

So please support these improvements in the lives of nurses, and the standard-raising we are trying to do to make Oregon a place where health care workers can stay and can live full lives. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Paige Spence