

April 11, 2025

Sen. Kate Lieber, Cochair

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Cochair

Joint Committee on Ways and Means RE: HB 3363 and SB 24

Cochairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Good evening committee, my name is Jenee Gillespie. I've been a registered nurse for ODOC for nearly 17 years. I'm here tonight in support of SB 24 and minimum staffing levels for DOC medical staff.

I work at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution (EOCI). We currently house roughly 1300 adults in custody. That number has varied throughout the years and ranged as high as nearly 1900. We have had many occasions where staffing levels of nurses and providers were at critical levels. I can't remember a time we've been fully staffed for any longer than a few weeks. We currently are battling the challenge of a lack of providers. As of today, one nurse practitioner, who works 25 hours a week, is responsible for our institution. As well as another part time provider that can only help with the clerical side of our clinic due to injury. We are drowning!! A lack of providers ultimately back logs onto nursing staff. Checking in on patients repeatedly for change in status due to long wait times to be seen in person by the provider. Adults in Custody (AIC's) are angry. Things are delayed. Nurses don't know what to say, so we keep doing our best. We offer reassurance to our patients while we work diligently to get them a provider appointment, but ultimately we know the line is long. We are burnt out!

I've traveled and met with state legislators in 2016. I left that session feeling heard, but sadly the bill never made it out of ways and means. At that time, our cry for help was the SAME as it is today. We need change! And it is worse now than ever before. I would like to ask that you all think about this....

Would we rather pay more for change that helps us deliver better quality health care to this population and increase longevity in the workforce of nurses or pay out on the other side.... the side of litigation and missed opportunity. If we don't start solving this now, I don't know how we can continue long term.

I invite any of you to come and visit, I would love to be your tour guide. You could have a backstage pass to the life of a DOC medical staff for the day. Being a corrections nurse isn't just a job title to me. It's who I am, more of a call of duty! Please give consideration to this bill, we need change, the time is now. SB 24 is the change we need.

Jenee Gillespie

DOC RN

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