

Co Chairs Lieber and Sanchez and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Jennifer Bruning and I have been a Correctional Nurse for 20 years. I work at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton.

We have been short-staffed for at least the last 10 years, and currently have one part-time nurse practitioner and about 14 full time nurses for a population of about 1300 patients providing 24 hour care.

Mental health providers are not staffed around the clock, so nursing staff fill in and provide emergency mental health services in the evenings, nights, and all day on Sundays.

Contract nurses are necessary to fill in the gaps in our schedules, we cannot function without them. They are paid more than us staff nurses but are usually trained to just one or two of our posts. In addition, contract nurses are not subjected to mandatory overtime.

Most of us pick up an extra 4 hour shift once or twice a week to help reduce mandatory overtime. For the day shift, this involves coming to work at 2:00am. I did that twice this last week and it makes me so tired at the end of my shift at 4:00 that I often end up going to bed shortly after coming home, missing out on valuable time with my family.

My husband also worked in Corrections and Law Enforcement for 24 years, retiring in 2022 from EOCI. We made the decision for him to stay home with our 3 elementary aged children because we could no longer juggle the long hours and unpredictable overtime involved when both of us were working.

I encourage you to support Senate Bill 24. Our nurses at all of our Oregon Correctional Facilities have always "done more with less," but the situation has become dire and we are desperate for more nurses and providers statewide.

Thank you,
Jennifer Bruning