

Submitter: melissa Arguello Belli
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570
Testimony in Support of Oregon Senate Bill 1570 (2026)

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a physician practicing in Oregon, and I am here to speak in strong support of Senate Bill 1570.

In my exam rooms, I am confronted daily by faces constricted by anguish and fear. These are not abstract policy impacts — they are human beings sitting in front of me, people I know well, people whose children I have cared for, people who trust me with their lives. Increasingly, I hear stories of patients who have gone without health care, food, and stable housing — not because resources do not exist, but because fear has made access feel too dangerous.

Children are afraid. They ask whether it is safe to go to school, whether it is safe to come to the doctor, whether their parents will still be there when they get home. I see this fear show up as anxiety, sleep problems, regression, missed school, and behavioral crises. Parents delay care until children are sicker. Families ration medications, avoid clinics, and disappear from care altogether. This level of fear is heartbreaking, and it is difficult to understand that it is unfolding in our communities.

As clinicians, we are trained to recognize suffering and to intervene early, before harm becomes irreversible. Senate Bill 1570 is an essential intervention. It affirms that access to health care is not something to be feared, and that no one — especially no child — should have to choose between safety and health.

This bill matters because it restores trust: trust that health care settings are places of care, not surveillance; trust that seeking help will not place families at risk; trust that Oregon stands by its values. From the exam room to the broader public health system, SB 1570 will reduce suffering, protect children, and allow clinicians to do what we are trained to do — care for people without fear or interference.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1570.

Thank you for listening.

Melissa Arguello Belli, MD