

Submitter:

MARK FORTON

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1570

Like many healthcare workers, I strongly believe hospitals must be places of safety, healing, and trust for every patient who seeks care. That is already the mission that guides our work every day. Within my organization and others across Oregon, established policies and processes are already in place to protect patient privacy and ensure care is delivered without fear or discrimination.

While SB 1570 is well intentioned, it places unrealistic and unworkable responsibilities on frontline caregivers and hospitals. Contrary to how the bill has been described, it does not regulate federal immigration authorities. Instead, it holds healthcare workers and facilities accountable for actions well beyond our authority or control. This creates confusion, fear, and risk for caregivers whose full attention should be on clinical care.

The language of the bill is broad and ambiguous, placing caregivers in impossible positions. A worker who does too little risks penalties under the bill, while a worker who does too much could face serious federal consequences. This legal uncertainty does not improve patient safety. It undermines it.

I am also deeply concerned about the significant waste of taxpayer dollars this bill would create. SB 1570 would require new layers of compliance, enforcement, investigation, and legal oversight while providing no clear improvement in patient outcomes or public safety. At a time when Oregon's healthcare system is already under strain, taxpayer dollars should be directed toward staffing, equipment, access to care, and patient services, not toward punitive oversight mechanisms that distract from care delivery.

Additionally, the authority granted to the Oregon Health Authority to suspend, deny, or revoke hospital licenses would only worsen access to care across the state. These penalties would not address the actions of federal agencies, but instead punish hospitals, caregivers, and the communities that depend on them. That is not a responsible use of public funds.

Healthcare workers need clarity, coordination, and support from federal, state, and local agencies when issues of public safety arise, not legislation that exposes them to liability and drains limited public resources. We should stop wasting taxpayer dollars on policies that create risk without delivering results.

I respectfully urge lawmakers to slow down and work collaboratively with caregivers, healthcare organizations, labor representatives, and community leaders to find a better solution. In its current form, SB 1570 is not the answer, and I ask that you oppose this bill.