

Submitter: Kristin Wethern
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570
February 5, 2026
RE: Testimony in Support of SB 1570-1

To the Senate Health Care Committee:

I am providing written testimony in support of SB 1570 because I want hospitals to remain safe places for all to access healthcare for themselves and their families regardless of place of birth or immigration status in our community. I am a bedside nurse at a hospital in Portland, OR. I haven't personally had to deal with having immigration agents at my patient's bedside but other nurses have had to do this at my facility. They tell stories of immigration agents being at the bedside, trying to influence length of stay, trying to access personal health information for sick or injured people and generally acting unprofessionally and in an intimidating way. I can't imagine having to work taking care of patients in this environment. I have worked with local law enforcement and the experience has been fine. They have acted professionally and respectfully.

Publicly, I have had two experiences with ICE agents. One, I was near the ICE facility in SW Portland and watched them kidnap a young woman who was sitting on the sidewalk creating a protest sign. They wore masks and carried guns and deployed tear gas canisters on the ground. It all happened quickly and without warning. The other time was this past weekend at the protest by local unions that included supportive family members and children as well. Again without warning, so much tear gas was deployed that people couldn't see or breathe. This, all against people exercising their first amendment right to speak up. These agents are lawless and intend to incite fear. The people that they detain are often not here illegally but are US citizens or immigrants taking proper steps to be here legally. This aside, it's upsetting that these agents are allowed in the hospital at all. Having them there is not conducive to healing or health in any way. If they do have a judicial warrant, I expect it to be readily available for me to see so that in protection of my nursing license, I don't have to question whether the agent should even be there or not. I as a nurse feel protective of all my patient's privacy. We always ask questions and don't give away information unless it's okay with the patient. This shouldn't be different for anyone, no matter their immigration status.

I think the State of Oregon does need to be involved. This isn't a normal law enforcement situation. My employer has policies regarding how to deal with law enforcement. The situations my colleagues have described having ICE or CBP

agents at the bedside are different. Times have changed, ICE has escalated in violence and intimidation tactics since those policies have been written and they are not part of our community as local law enforcement is. We can try to hold ICE and CPB agents to the same standards as local law enforcement. Unfortunately, we need the state and local LEO's to support hospitals when ICE acts in a way that would require an agent to be removed from a hospital.

Another component to the proposed bill had to do with nurses being able to share resources such as the Know Your Rights Red Card without retaliation by the employer. Something that I do everyday as a nurse is assess my patient's psychosocial needs and provide resources. The time has come that I believe resources such as the Red Card support a person's ability to feel educated and supported in a holistic way. It's not legal advice given by a nurse, it's community knowledge and sharing.

Having ICE at the bedside or lurking in the hallways will only cost more in the long run. People won't seek care for themselves or their children until it is an emergency. The sicker people are, the more it costs all of us with longer hospital stays, etc. Hospitals and clinics need to be safe, trusted places for anyone to access needed healthcare in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and I look forward to your support.

Kristin, RN