

Submitter: Carmela Joy Klingenberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Nelson and Diehl, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Carmela Joy Klingenberg. I am a nurse and have worked as a registered nurse for 10 years. I currently work at Kaiser Westside Medical Center in Hillsboro, Oregon and I am a member of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP AFT-5017). I am writing in strong opposition to HB 4074.

Every day, I provide direct patient care, and the nurse staffing law passed in 2023 has a real impact on my ability to do my job safely and effectively. HB 4074 would make significant changes to the enforcement of that law. If passed, patient care will be delayed since staffing ratio per nurse has increased. As of now nurses in our floor do full care (meaning no CNA assigned to a patient) for 2-3 out of 4 patients every shift during the day. This is not an easy task every shift, most of the time we are unable to answer patient request on time especially if we have more than one critical or confused patients, do basic adl's like brushing teeth, shower/bed bath, cleaning patients on time because we don't have enough CNA's on the floor. Increasing the ratio to 1:5 will even delay care and compromise patient safety.

HB 2697 was the result of years of research, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement. Rushing through changes to the statute will only put providers and patients at risk. Advancing HB 4074 now would shortcut that process and risk unintended consequences that cannot be fully evaluated in the limited time available.

From my experience, the current law is working as intended, and barriers to passing plans are rooted in unwillingness to utilize escalation and acuity tools. Hospitals were given ample time to comply, and the vast majority have done so. Kaiser has delayed engaging in bargaining discussion for months, this include safe staffing. As of this time, Kaiser has not made progress in reaching a complete tentative agreement.

Weakening enforcement through delayed penalties or reduced accountability would effectively suspend the law without the thoughtful analysis such changes demand. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 4074 as currently written. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Carmela Joy Klingenberg, RN