

February 11, 2026

RE: Testimony in Opposition to HB 4074

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 4074. As a bedside Labor & Delivery registered nurse in Oregon, I have firsthand experience with how staffing conditions directly affect patient safety, clinician wellbeing, and the quality of care families receive at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. HB 4074 represents a dangerous step backward in the progress Oregon has made toward safer hospital care.

In 2023, Oregon passed HB 2697 as a consensus effort to establish meaningful hospital staffing standards. That legislation acknowledged what bedside clinicians and patient advocates have long known: strong staffing laws—coupled with real enforcement—are tied to improved patient outcomes and make healthcare work sustainable. HB 4074 effectively attempts to undo this progress by returning us to a system that failed both patients and healthcare workers.

Every Oregonian who requires hospital care deserves to enter an environment staffed to support healing, vigilance, and compassionate attention. Likewise, every caregiver deserves protections against burnout and moral injury. HB 2697 advanced these shared values. Reversing those protections undermines Oregon's commitment to safe, patient-centered care.

HB 4074 would allow hospitals to self-attest compliance with staffing requirements, weaken transparency around staffing deviations, cap fines, eliminate penalties for failing to adopt staffing plans, remove agency authority to suspend or revoke licenses for violations, and delay enforcement measures for years. Hospitals cannot be relied upon to simply self-report compliance when meaningful accountability is removed. Self-attestation lacks objectivity and eliminates the essential checks-and-balances structure that protects both patients and staff. Without independent oversight and enforceable consequences, staffing standards risk becoming symbolic rather than protective. This is a recipe for stagnation or decline in patient safety.

From my bedside perspective, the consequences of inadequate staffing are not theoretical. When nurses are stretched too thin, early warning signs of complications can be missed or delayed. Patients may not receive the emotional presence and education they need. Care can be postponed, risks increase, and clinicians experience escalating moral distress. Over time, this contributes to burnout, workforce attrition, and poorer health outcomes, these outcomes will harm both families and the healthcare system as a whole.

Supporters of this bill have framed their position as "It's about people not politics". I agree that healthcare policy should center people. That is precisely why HB 4074 must be rejected.

Removing protections that allow nurses to safely care for their patients threatens patient wellbeing, clinician licensure, and the sustainability of our workforce. True people-centered policy strengthens safeguards—it does not dismantle them.

Oregon took an important step forward with HB 2697. Passing HB 4074 would reverse that progress and send the message that accountability and patient safety are negotiable. I urge you to stand with patients, nurses, and healthcare teams across the state by opposing this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
An Oregon Bedside Nurse, BSN, RN