

Virginia Smith, ONA Board of Directors

Feb. 10, 2026

No on HB 4074

Good afternoon Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Diehl and Nelson, and Committee members. My name is Virginia Smith, I co-chair Providence Willamette Falls staffing committee, and I am speaking in strong opposition to House Bill 4074.

HB 4074 delays penalties until 2030, caps fines, eliminates penalties for failing to adopt staffing plans, and removes license enforcement authority. That effectively suspends the law for seven years.

Hospitals only changed behavior when consequences became real. Most hospitals are compliant today. These rollbacks protect the small number of hospitals that refuse to follow the law.

My hospital was proactive prior to the 2023 staffing law, and hired RNs and CNAs to meet the statutory requirements even prior to moving all our unit-level nurse staffing plans through the housewife nurse staffing committee. Our staffing plans all either meet the statutory ratios or are BETTER than the law. We have been able to comply with the rest and meal break requirements as stipulated by BOLI without having to bend the staffing law

in any way. We have seen steady and continuous improvement in patient outcomes, and certainly increased staff satisfaction. We get report-outs from management that we are within our budget. We have had record low reports of staffing deviations. My unit (Med-Surg) in particular has a great reputation throughout the Providence system for being a great unit to work on. I do new nurse orientation and have nurses tell me regularly that they have moved to Oregon to be a nurse because of our staffing law.

There is simply no reason to go backwards: This bill's proposed penalty caps turn patient harm into a line item where hospitals could - and would - staff to grossly unsafe low standards and jeopardize health outcomes.

This bill does not fix implementation — it guts enforcement. A safety law without consequences is not a law at all.