

Submitter: Stephanie Vila
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4074

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

My name is Stephanie Vila, I have been an RN for 10 years with experience working in multiple hospitals (Arizona and Oregon). I currently work for Providence and Kaiser Permanent, and I am a member of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP AFT-5017) and Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). I am writing in strong opposition to HB 4074.

I am grateful that the nurse staffing law passed in 2023. Without it, I know there have been times where patients have had serious complications and with added staff support they were able to receive proper care. HB 4074 would make significant changes to the enforcement of that law and create unsafe situations be much more common in healthcare. I understand healthcare is a business but we are talking about human lives being impacted negatively with HB 4074. Having a break RN alone, has allowed much safer environments for patients. I currently take care of 5 people at one time. I have had individuals almost bleed out and I could not leave their side; the break RN was able to assist with managing my other 4 patients until I could transfer that patient to emergent surgery.

Safety will regress if we go back on HB 2697 and remove safe staffing ratios. With experience working in a state (AZ) without safe staffing laws, I can personally tell you the care is dramatically different and unsafe. We are not asking for safe staffing ratios because we are lazy, we are asking in order to save lives. It matters how many people we can care for at a time and hospital organizations only see patients as numbers on paper, not as individuals with lives. Nothing is worse than walking away from the hospital knowing people did not get the care they deserved and required due to the hospital intentionally stretching the staff thin. I think it is important Oregon sets an example of what providing proper care to individuals looks like, and HB 4074 opposes everything Oregon stands for. Hospitals have staffed up significantly and do have enough RNs to meet the ratios for HB 2697. They continue to cancel RNs when overstaffed which is why unions are fighting for a no cancellation policy in their contracts. Their excuse to say they have not had enough time to staff up for the proper ratios in HB 2697 is inaccurate.

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.

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,
Stephanie Vila