



Testimony in Support of SB 409
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Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 409. My name is Paul van Waardenburg and I am a member of the Oregon Nurses Association, representing thousands of nurses across the state.

I was formerly a surgical nurse where we cared for many amputees. Best practice states that these patients are best treated with atypical non-habit forming pain control like Lyrica. However, because of their high cost, most of my patients could not afford these options. Patients then only had pain support through narcotic pain control, which although affordable, comes with a slew of complications as evidenced by the national opioid crisis.

In my current role as a critical care nurse in Lane County I am now seeing this problem come full circle in our elder patients. They are admitted to the hospital and often intubated to treat pneumonia and other respiratory diseases. My colleagues and I are seeing firsthand vulnerable patients on daily narcotic pain control, instead of Lidoderm or Voltaren, simply because it is the only option that the average Medicare patient in rural Oregon can afford. This is unacceptable, and it's putting already vulnerable populations significantly further at risk.

SB 409 proposes a solution to this growing problem by allowing legal, safe importation of prescription drugs from Canada. This would not only produce significant consumer cost savings but also uphold strong prescription drug safety standards shared by the US and Canada. Drug importation is a simple, safe approach that creates healthy competition so that bad actors can't fly above the market while my patients struggle to pay for essential prescription drugs that cost just cents on the dollar for our neighbors in Canada.

I stand with ONA in supporting SB 409 because Oregon patients deserve better and nurses are tired of seeing our patients at risk. Our state requires a comprehensive approach to lowering costs, increasing industry transparency, and reducing price increases. SB 409 is one critical component of making sure that Oregonians can get the prescriptions they need and deserve.

I urge your support for SB 409. Thank you for your time.