



January 30, 2019

Chair Greenlick, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden, members of the committee. My name is Kyndall Mason; I am a political and policy strategist for SEIU Local 503, focusing on long term care. Our Local represents more than 30,000 long term care workers, many of whom work in nursing homes and increasingly, assisted living facilities. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of those workers in an effort to bring insight and emphasize due diligence in in the undertaking of HB 2600.

Working in a nursing home is hard physical and emotional labor and much of it is underpaid, undervalued, and undertrained. This workforce, of mostly women, show up day in and day out for people who are not their friends or family members to provide care for a wage that is often times too little to live on. With low wages, and little access to training and support, the job is often too much, and the industry itself feels that in the form of a workforce crisis. This crisis is costing quality care.

I am here to speak to the fundamentals of HB 2600, because it touches on two key aspects we have been working towards as an organization, which are quality training, and worker pay and protections. These things enhance the lives of not just workers, but also people receiving services. We ask that as we move to the rule making process, SEIU play a role in defining what the worker protections look like, as the statute change here doesn't clarify what those are. SEIU believes in the pillars of Oregon's long term care system, which are independence, dignity and respect, and when workers are prepared to do their job, and receive the pay and supports to do so, everyone wins.

Thank you for your time today.

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