



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 754

February 25, 2019

Senate Committee on Health

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports SB 754, which would create a tax credit for rural nurse faculty members.

SB 754's creation of tax incentives that attract nursing educators to underserved, rural areas of the state, in our opinion, is a much-needed relief. We believe that nursing faculty incentives, as a part of a comprehensive provider shortage strategy, will help align the mismatch between students seeking a nursing education and the nursing faculty available to teach them. Such incentives have the potential to increase Oregon's nursing enrollment which is critical to the State's expansion of health care access and CCO 2.0 initiatives.

As you are aware, the health status of a state's residents drives its economic success. If we are unable to support and maintain a healthy workforce, our economy fails. If we are not able to support communities in the prevention of infectious disease, we are all at risk of contagion. If we are not moving in a strategic direction to address the health needs of our more senior residents, who choose to retire to less populated areas in the state, we risk exacerbating the aging process and increasing their health care costs due to delayed assessment and treatment.

We believe that the challenges facing many residents in these communities, and the educators who wish to prepare the next generation of providers who serve them, require additional resources. A tax incentive will be a step in the right direction, understanding that infrastructural resources must eventually be allocated so that these communities have access to the technologies and best practices that are available in more urban parts of the state.

For these reasons, and many more, we support SB 754 because it aligns with our mission to support quality care and healthy communities in the State of Oregon; we hope it aligns with your vision for the state, as well, and that you will support the bill.