



Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 2116

February 21, 2019

House Committee on Revenue

Deborah Riddick

Good morning Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Findley and Marsh, 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 opposes HB 2116, which would require certain licensees to demonstrate and maintain tax compliance as condition of issuance or renewal of license.

To be clear, ONA does not condone or defend any individual or any corporation that, in direct violation of the law, fails to pay taxes. HB 2116 appears to address a concern that we agree needs to be addressed. We, however, oppose this bill as a vehicle to collect unpaid tax liabilities. It is a blanket approach to address identifiable bad actors and, as such, adds a costly administrative burden that we believe is unnecessary due to existing tax collection law.

The additional administrative expense and regulatory penalties created by HB 2116 should concern any member who opposes overregulation. Again, the tax law has provisions that address evasion. It's disproportionate impact to licensees of lower economic status, which would further jeopardize their economic stability and that of their dependents, should concern any member who opposes economic disparities. Eliminating a licensee's ability to earn a living actually negates the ability to pay the delinquent tax liability. This bill, if passed, could destabilize Oregon's workforce across every licensed profession by inhibiting licensed practice; negatively impacting the markets these services drive, and the leaving consumers who rely on the services of impacted licensees with limited options.

The productivity of a state's residents drives its economic success. If we are unable to support and maintain a highly skilled workforce, our economy fails. We believe that the revenue challenges facing our state require additional resources. However, consistent enforcement of our current tax laws, not HB 2116, is the most cost-effective and efficient solution. We urge you to vote "no" on HB 2116.