

Testimony for Public Hearing
Senate Committee on Health Care
February 25, 2019
Andrew Middleton, MSN, RN

SB 754: Relating to a tax credit for rural nurse faculty members

Good Afternoon Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care. My name is Andrew Middleton and I am a Registered Nurse (RN), licensed paramedic, Emergency Room Nurse, and Interventional Radiology Nurse. I am investing my experience and knowledge into the future of Oregonians now by working as full-time faculty for the Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing located in Monmouth, Oregon.

I am writing to you in support of SB 754: Relating to a tax credit for rural nurse faculty members. This bill addresses a looming need in the State of Oregon: a critical shortage of nursing faculty and in turn, a shortage in nurses trained to meet the demands of an aging population in need of higher acuity nursing care. There is no shortage of students applying for positions in nursing programs. Oregon remains highly competitive in regard to admissions into schools of nursing at both the associate and bachelor's degree levels. Unfortunately, a significant shortage of faculty makes it difficult to fill existing positions, much less expand programs to accommodate more students.

A significant factor in recruiting and retaining nursing faculty is the financial cost associated with transitioning from clinical care to academia. When I left my position as a full time Emergency Room Nurse to teach for OHSU, I accepted a difference in annual salary of over \$40,000. This reduction in pay occurred concurrently with increased educational loan payments to cover the cost of advancing my degree. This has been a difficult transition financially for my family, compounded by the fact that my wife, also a registered nurse, has transitioned from clinical care to teaching at the same time. Our current combined salaries are approximately equal to my own previous earnings when providing bedside care. This is challenging for nurses who want to serve in an educational position but are unable to manage the drastic difference in compensation.

I do not regret making this change in my career as I believe in the importance of providing excellent education to the next generation of nurses, arming them with the tools they need to provide evidence-based care, advocacy, and resources for all Oregonians. I hope you will consider approving this bill, validating the hard work and financial sacrifice of nursing faculty throughout the state.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Andrew Middleton, MSN, RN