



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

Chair Paul Holvey
House Rules Committee

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Smith Warner and Drazen,

For the record, my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council, here to voice our support for HB 4016A.

This bill provides funding, innovation and strategic needs for our aging population and the requests for service from Oregon's Emergency Medical System (EMS).

When a need arises your Oregon Fire District's respond without fail. While call volumes escalate from 5 to 25% annually across Oregon every year with an aging population being a significant portion, we need strategy's to make certain each person needs are met. As a matter of percentages, the cost of health cares doubles beginning at age 70. This area of service is where HB 4016 concentrates it's value to the health care system and the EMS community's impact on care to the elderly.

We have different success stories that are small in scale, yet high in impact for the communities they serve. Community Paramedics are one potential option that this bill could fund and bring real relief for repeated calls for assistance and get the correct resource to meet the needs of our aging population. Whether it be readmission to the hospital, or fall prevention and staff training, Community Fire Paramedics bring the trust of mission and sense of security to one of our most vulnerable populations.

As I spoke before, escalating call volumes and flat increases in staffing shrink our ability to answer 911 calls for service. Whether calls for service or fire or medical related, it is very challenging to keep response times down to industry standards. One solution is to change response criteria for immediate response, which relies on near perfect call taker information to begin the system activation, which has proven problematic over the last 20 years or so. The public's medical emergency often times does not equate to a life ending emergency for first responders. Here in lies the challenge. Oregon's emergency responders answer every call in every part of the state without prejudice and meet everyone's immediate needs. Often at the cost of slower response times to other emergencies due to lack of human resources.

This Bill will give Oregon's most resourceful group of first responders the needed revenue to prove that non-traditional response can be cost effective for both the patients, caregivers and Fire District's across the entire State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Karl Koenig /s

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council

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