

Hello, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

My name is Trevor Phillips.

I am a resident of Marion County (specifically Salem, Oregon). My testimony today represents my personal opinions, and do not represent the positions of any other organizations or municipalities.

I am here to testify in favor of HB 2461 and HB 2891.

I am a Board-Certified Emergency Room doctor and have cared for over 25,000 patients in the Salem community. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every swath of our society, but the impact of pandemic on frontline healthcare workers has been profound.

Things have improved, but the need for real change remains. Do you remember your friends on the frontlines of health posting to phrases like #GetMeThePPE and #GETUSTHEPPE on social media?

PPE stands for Personal Protective Equipment. Protective facemasks, eye protection, gowns and gloves are a literal lifeline in my field of work.

I, for one, will never forget the insecurity that our frontline healthcare workers felt in the early months of the pandemic. We had to learn to conserve and reuse masks in ways that we never previously imagined. We adapted and made real progress, but we absolutely must do more to protect our frontline healthcare workers and essential workers in our community.

Specifically, it is my opinion that we continue to have a shortage of N-95 masks and KN-95 rated masks. Recently, a Harvard researcher has advocated for the more widespread use of N-95's and KN-95 rated masks in high-risk settings throughout our country. This is especially important given the rapid spread of new COVID-19 variants that are significantly more infectious. Dr. Sanjay Gupta of CNN went so far as to say that 4 weeks of improved use of high-quality air born rate masks could theoretically "end the pandemic."

Between the Pandemic and the historic forest fires this past fall we have seen our usual supply chains bend to the point of breaking. At every level of government, we need to do more. I'm in favor of utilizing the Defense Production Act at the Federal level, and I'm committed to supporting real change locally in the State of Oregon. I think that these two bills HB 2461 and HB 2891 take real steps to ensure that I and my colleagues will never have to utter the phrase #GetMeUSPPE again. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Sincerely, Trevor Phillips, MD