



## Testimony in Support of House Bills HB 3016

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Senate Committee on Health Care

Lynda Pond, RN

Good afternoon Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee. My name is Lynda Pond. I am the Board President for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses and professional members, and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. I have been a practicing nurse in Oregon for 34 years. ONA stands in solidarity with our members and in strong support of HB 3016, which would update nurse staffing law processes under executive order.

Our nurse members, statewide, have consistently rated nurse staffing issues as their number one priority during each legislative session. These issues challenge our members' ability to care for their patients and for themselves. We hear these concerns, in varying degrees, regardless of practice specialty or geographic location in the state. And when our members' concerns remain unaddressed and when their voices go unheard, those concerns come to ONA. As the executive leading the organization, their challenges and frustrations become mine. HB 3016 addresses an unforeseen yet solvable issue that impacts patient and provider safety. I am here today to seek a remedy for my nurses, Oregon's nursing workforce.

HB 3016 addresses Oregon's staffing plan suspension during an emergency order. From March 2020 through early winter, our office was inundated with calls, emails, and IMs from members demanding answers and assurances that we couldn't give them, and that their employers wouldn't give them. We tried desperately to quell their fears. We tried to offer grace to employers whose lack of preparedness and appropriate resources, literally, put our members lives in danger. Our members wanted collaboration on working conditions, containment efforts, and financial supports. They needed to know that they were as important as their facility's financial stability. Days turned into weeks turned into months turned into nearly a year. We and our nurses have spent nearly a year fighting for a collaborative space to get answers and problem solve. The additional stress and trauma our nurses have endured is incalculable and enduring.

HB 3016 creates a predictable process for problem-solving and collaboration that puts nurses, facilities, communities, and our state in a better position to address our next emergency. It commits a 90-day timeline to develop a contingency plan that respects nursing expertise and incorporates the perspectives of those who are putting their lives on the line, to keep all of us safe, our nurses. In summary, HB 3016:

- uses a familiar process that's already in place; staffing committees establish by law.
- allows for a decision-making process that considers individual facility needs and staffing limitations.
- provides flexibility based on the decisions each staffing committee adopts as a contingency.
- eliminates the information gap that was a huge disconnect to cohesive care and service throughout our current pandemic; and
- improves buy-in because those impacted contribute to the plan's formation.

For more than a year now, we have heard how much our sacrifices are appreciated. We've read the news stories and witnessed the public statements. We've heard the taglines and hashtags. What Oregon nurses want more than anything are the support and protections that HB 3016 provide. Your colleagues in the House demonstrated their support of our nursing workforce; now it's up to this committee. On the eve of Nurse's Week 2021, in the midst of yet another surge, **We urge a YES vote and unanimous passage of HB 3016.**