



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2077

February 2, 2021

House Committee on Health Care

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Good afternoon Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Salinas and Hayden, 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 and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 2077 which would require identification, to Oregon Health Authority, any third party that performs lead-based paint activities or renovation as a continued step in the right direction in lead abatement efforts.

The ONA commends Governor Brown and the Oregon Health Authority for their acknowledgement that greater oversight of lead abatement of pre-1978 property is needed and for their willingness to codify expectations. We believe that giving the Oregon Health Authority greater statutory authority to monitor lead-based paint risk assessments, abatements, and lead-based paint hazards strengthens current law, to the benefit of the unsuspecting public. The third-party identification requirement streamlines the accountability process.

Lead exposure and poisoning, especially for toddlers and small children who explore their new world through touch and taste, as a normal developmental stage, poses a significant health risk. The Center on Disease Control and Prevention acknowledges that there is currently no safe level of lead exposure for children. It also cites such life-long and potentially debilitating chronic conditions as brain and nervous system damage; growth and developmental delays; learning and behavioral challenges; and difficulty hearing and speaking. <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/health-effects.htm>

The data also reflects that BIPOC and low wages earners are disproportionately impacted because they are less likely to be able to afford new construction housing. These groups are also more likely to be directed to sub-standard, older housing resulting from historical redlining and discriminatory practices. This confluence of contributory factors puts generations of Oregonians at risk of educational and economic inequities.

While complete lead abatement in housing should remain the long-term goal, the ONA supports this bill's purpose, intent and for the possibilities it inspires. We need to pursue complete eradication with the same passion and fervor as is reflected in our goals on global warming and carbon emissions. The scale is finite, the strategies and tools knowable, and the opportunity is tangible. ONA encourages this committee to support the ideals HB 2077 represents and to heighten efforts in future sessions to make safe housing for everyone the standard.