



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

February 23, 2021

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Katie Shriver and I represent SEIU Oregon. SEIU is an 85,000 member union in Oregon and SW Washington and a 2 million member union nationally. I am here today in support of HB 3016.

SEIU is a very diverse union representing health care workers, property services workers, homecare and personal support workers, nursing home and nonprofit workers, janitors, public workers, and many others. Our mission as a union is to achieve a higher standard of living for our members, their families, and dependents by elevating their social conditions and by striving to create a more just society.

SEIU represents thousands of hospital workers, including CNAs, LPNs, environmental services workers, respiratory therapists, mental health therapists and others at the Oregon State Hospital, and many others. SEIU workers provide quality patient care and keep hospitals clean and operational. Chronic understaffing in hospitals drives down morale, negatively affects worker retention, and ultimately impacts the quality of patient care.

Hospital workers at every level in facilities and our health care system more broadly, including nursing homes and in home care, have been pushed to near breaking points due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Modern Healthcare named The Front-Line Worker the Most Influential Person in Healthcare in 2020. “From doctors and nurses to respiratory therapists and anesthesiologists to environmental service workers and administrators, healthcare workers have, as so many across the nation proclaimed, been the true heroes of this pandemic.” These frontline healthcare workers have stepped up during an executive order emergency declaration that has been in place for nearly a year.

The pandemic has created staffing challenges and highlighted the importance of effective hospital staffing. For example, at the Oregon State Hospital, staffing shortages caused by COVID-19 have resulted in increased overtime, staff performing duties outside of their day-to-day job, and impacts to patient services. As another example, SEIU 49 member Krystie Holder is a CNA at Legacy Good Samaritan who checks patients into the Emergency Department. Because of staffing shortfalls during the

COVID pandemic, Krystie has taken on new tasks in her day-to-day work, such as housekeeping, and she has also experienced an increase in aggressive or violent interactions with patients.

HB 3016 will make important changes that address an oversight in current law related to hospital staffing during executive order emergency declarations. When the Legislature adopted the existing staffing committee law, no one imagined a global pandemic that would create a situation in which an executive order would be in place for a year or longer. HB 3016 will update the law and create a flexible contingency plan that draws on the expertise of staffing committees during times of crisis.

I ask for your support for HB 3016.