



Testimony in Support of HB 3016

February 23, 2021

House Committee On HealthCare

Travis Nelson, RN (ONA Cabinet on Health Police VC)

Good afternoon Chair Prusak and members of the committee.

My name is Travis Nelson, and I am a member of The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). I'm here today to testify in support of HB 3016 as one of ONA's 15,000 registered nurses, Nurse Practitioners of Oregon, and professional member affiliates throughout the state. I am honored to be one of those Nurses and helping to represent our organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted an unforeseen flaw in the across the board suspension of the nurse staffing committees and its related staffing plans. We know that our nursing workforce had to adopt less than optimal standards in order to address the needs of our patients, and employers. This short-term strategy, while necessary, revealed a lack of preparedness and left nurses, throughout the state, without an ability to form contingency plans at a time when nursing expertise was most desperately needed. This amendment to the law would center the needs of our patients by maintaining the collaborative, solution-based framework of our hospital nurse staffing committees to address evolving conditions and maintain a cohesive work environment. It's a proactive approach to emergency preparedness that limits uncertainty and better prepares our health care system for future catastrophic events.

Despite there being a national nursing shortage, Oregon is a place where RN's want to come work. The natural appeal of Oregon along with generally good compensation and good working conditions attract RN's from around the country. When they work well, our staffing laws and staffing committees play a role in achieving job satisfaction for RN's. We must close this loophole in the law to ensure that RN's can continue to provide safe care, even during an emergency or a pandemic....by safeguarding the work of the hospital staffing committees.

I support HB 3016, and we ask that you vote favorably to move the bill out of committee.