



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 7, 2022

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Katie Shriver, and I work with the SEIU Oregon State Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 4003. We support this important effort to address Oregon's nursing workforce shortage with amendments to ensure inclusivity within the new Nurse Intern Program and in the expanded Oregon Wellness Program.

Together, SEIU 49 and 503 represent 85,000 working Oregonians. Our mission is to achieve a higher standard of living for our members, their families, and their dependents by elevating social conditions and striving to create a more just society. We represent thousands of healthcare workers, including homecare workers; personal care attendants; certified nursing assistants; medical assistants; phlebotomists; surgical techs, emergency room techs, pharmacy techs, and radiologic techs; respiratory therapists and physical therapists; environmental and dietary services workers; and mental health therapists in the Oregon State Hospital. Healthcare workers represented by SEIU are among the lower paid workers in the healthcare sector, and SEIU members in healthcare are more likely to be people of color.

As we work to address the COVID-accelerated nurse shortage, we should focus on career ladders and educational opportunities for people who are already working in the healthcare sector. Certified nursing assistants, medical assistants, and the other healthcare workers are already skilled at and familiar with the demands of working with patients in healthcare settings – and many will be willing to stay in the field and continue their education if afforded opportunities and support to do so. It just makes sense to ensure that as a state we're seeing our current healthcare workforce as a pool of talent for Registered Nurse and other advanced positions within healthcare.

With this in mind, we encourage you to consider adding language to HB 4003 directing the Board of Nursing to ensure that the new Nurse Intern Program is available and accessible for current healthcare workers who are working at the same time as in Registered Nurse training programs. In addition, to ensure that Nurse Intern positions add to hospital staff capacity, we would request that if this bill moves the House Floor for a vote you put language on the Legislative record stating that the intent of this new temporary license is to add to fill a critical

training opportunity, and the program will increase hospital staff capacity rather than replacing existing hospital staff. Finally, to ensure that all nursing staff have access to the Oregon Wellness Program, we encourage you to replace “professionals” with “staff” on page 7, line 40.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your work on this important legislation.