

Submitter: Kathryn Harrington

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2652

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Nelson and Goodwin and members of the committee: My name is Kathryn Harrington, and I am the Chair of Washington County Board of Commissioners, and I am here to testify in support of HB 2652 and the -1 amendment.

Washington County is proud of what our county creates and exports. From semiconductors, to sporting apparel to our agricultural products we are exporting a lot, but one thing we are not proud of exporting is our nurses to other states. You do not have to look too far including in the Oregon Board of Nursing's Sentinel Fall 2022 issue to find out who is trying to poach our nurses. In the Sentinel on the second page is a full-page ad from Washington-based Evergreen Health offering nurses up to a \$20,000 sign-on bonus.

To be frank, Oregon cannot compete. As the record will show, this is not just happening in the nursing sector it is happening across the entire Health and Human Services field. We are witnessing and experiencing what that shortage of labor means for Oregonians. Longer waits at hospitals. Lack of veterinarians for our pets and livestock. Lack of direct care for older Oregonians and the list goes on. Thus, we are proud to support the third part of our Three to Thrive package through HB 2652.

HB 2652 provides \$59m for employers to offer employees and would be-employees recruitment and retention bonuses. While this is a significant ask in pales in comparison to the over \$400 million we have spent in temporary nursing contracts. We know that every employee is unique and that different bonuses serve as an equitable tool to meeting their needs. What of the employee who does not come from generational wealth? Oregon can pay for their loans. What of the employee who needs help paying for childcare? Oregon can cover that. What of the employee who wants to stay with their current employer to continue serving the marginalized? Oregon can do that. We know that community college faculty in health and human services programs are not paid appropriately. Oregon can fund that.

HB 2652 also funds educators and county staff to promote health eating, physical activity, and mental health because building for a community to thrive also means building for our children too.

This bill provides an incentive and innovation in the Health and Human Services fields. It allows Oregon to develop a unique selling position and makes us more competitive than other states all the while building out our necessary infrastructure for all Oregonians to thrive. I hope that you will support this investment so that when I return to the legislature, we will be discussing not the health and human services employees we have exported, but all of the workers we've retained and built with.