

Submitter: Kym Peterson

On Behalf Of: Patient Safety

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3223

My name is Kym Peterson and I am writing to urge you to vote No on House Bill 3223. This bill, if passed, would forbid the Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring dental assistants to pass a proficiency exam before providing the specialized care our certifications require.

House Bill 3223 is not the solution and it puts dental professionals like me, and the patients I serve, at risk. Dental Assisting Certificates are in place to confirm a person's knowledge of safety protocols, skill and knowledge. Removing these Board Exams does not serve the patients or the dental assistants safety.

Please vote No on HB 3223 because it:

- Increases risk to patient and provider, alike
- Waters down the quality of care received by patients
- Devalues the dental assisting profession
- Could worsen the workforce shortage

Proponents of the bill believe it will solve the dental assistant shortage, but there are dental assistant shortages in every state, including in those states where requirements for entry into the field are much less rigorous than Oregon's. Removing safety and proficiency measures will not solve the dental assisting shortage, and it could make it worse.

Removing the exam requirement devalues the dental assisting profession, making it more likely that dental assistants will leave for another career. Studies show that professional credentials increase career commitment and job satisfaction. Eliminating professional requirements does the opposite, while putting patients and providers at risk.

Board Exams are necessary to protect patients and workers. DANB Board Exams are convenient and accessible, and the content is validated and regularly updated. If this bill passes, it will make Oregon the first state to prohibit use of an objective exam to assess whether dental assistants have the knowledge required to proficiently and safely provide patient care.

I strongly urge you to vote No on HB 3223.

Thank you for your careful consideration of what is best for the health of Oregonians.

Kym Peterson