

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 704

February 13, 2023

Thank you, Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden. For the record, I am Travis Nelson - the State Representative for House District 44 and a Registered Nurse. Committee members, I am here today in support of Senate Bill 704. This bill would build on the work done by the Universal Health Care Taskforce and would continue the mandate passed by voters through Measure 111. It is well past time that we got corporate profit and private insurance out of Oregonians' health care. What providers and treatments are available to us shouldn't be determined by commercial bottom lines.

The United States is a world leader in more ways than we can count but being one of the largest countries in the world that does not offer Universal health care shouldn't be one of those reasons. Here, in Oregon, we have a chance to give all Oregonians the ability to access high-quality medical care without going into debt or being pushed into extreme poverty.

SB 704 establishes a governance board to oversee the implementation of universal health care here in our great state. Our constituents want health care that doesn't break the bank without having to sacrifice on the quality of services they receive. This board would be tasked with building out the framework for the state's proposed universal health care plan including the financing. Committee members, this bill is not asking you to decide on how universal health care will roll out in our state, nor to determine the intricacies of it. This bill is only establishing a board of experts to begin that work that Oregonians have said they are supportive of at the ballot box.

The last three years have seen an incredible strain on the lives of our constituents, from inflation and the rising cost of living to a pandemic that burdened families and health care capabilities alike. Many families have to spend an exorbitant amount of their monthly paycheck just to cover the monthly premium for a health care plan. And that's not including the copays, the prescriptions costs, the deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses that factor into that one urgent care visit. A trip to the doctor shouldn't break the bank and no one should ever die because they can't afford to pay. I urge you to pass SB 704 so that Oregon can take this important work to the next level.

On another note, there have been multiple conversations with stakeholders that led to Senator Manning submitting an amendment that will enhance SB 704. This amendment will include defining "single-payer healthcare" and establishing a clear Vision, Values, and Principles statement that guided the Universal Health Care Taskforce. I fully support this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Travis Nelson".

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland