

Submitter: Larlene Dunsmuir

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2408

Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care and Chairman Nosse:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in opposition of HB 2408 which would promote the enactment of Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) in Oregon.

As the former Director of Nursing Practice/Professional Services for the Oregon Nurses Association, current Secretary of the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon, a practicing Nurse Practitioner, and an adjunct faculty member of a school of nursing, I have spent more than three decades advocating for the practice of nursing. Over the last ten years, I have been a loud voice speaking in opposition of the spread of the NLC in Oregon and across the country. I am proud to practice in a state that holds high standards for licensure and promotes a broad scope of practice. That is not an easy balance!

The NLC is a product of the National Councils of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) which is a private, Chicago-based Trade Association. Enacting the NLC would allow nurses licensed in any other "compact" state to practice in Oregon without necessarily meeting the requirements for practice in Oregon.

Proponents of the NLC claim that participation in the compact will improve access to care and alleviate some of the burden of the nursing shortage. However, the compact allows nurses to enter the state to practice without registration so there is actually no data to prove that the NLC reduces the nursing shortage in any of the states that have enacted it. In fact, if you look at the data, many compact states have worse shortages than Oregon does. Proponents also claim that the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) is not able to process applications and endorsements in a timely way and that enacting the NLC may be the answer. To this I would answer that there are way more creative and effective ways to address the problems around licensing. HB 4003, passed during the last legislative session addressed many of these issues. Additionally, a deeper dive into the current backlog of licenses is probably warranted. The NLC erodes the individual states' power over regulation by creating Interstate Commissions, leading to more bureaucracy. These Commissions have the ability to take precedence over existing laws. By enacting the NLC, we will be willingly giving up some of our autonomy over nursing practice. This would likely have a negative impact on Oregon's broad scope of practice, especially for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses like Nurse Practitioners.

The nursing shortage in Oregon, and resultant barriers to healthcare access, are an important and complicated issue. There won't be an "easy" fix and the NLC is certainly not the right answer for nurses or patients. I ask the committee to continue to problem solve ways to address the nursing shortage, the workforce crisis, and the

barriers to healthcare access without accepting a solution that doesn't make sense for Oregon. Please reject enacting the Nurse Licensure Compact in Oregon!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Larlene Dunsmuir, DNP, FNP, ANP-BC