

Submitter: Josie Alexander

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2408

As an RN in Oregon I support HB 2408 for Oregon to join 37 other states in the Nurse Licensure Compact.

I've seen how much time & money was wasted during the pandemic because OR was not part of the Nurse Licensure Compact, it was ALL self-inflicted & only hurt patients. After 15 years of being a nurse I am so sick of hearing there is a "nursing shortage" then DO something about it, I believe this is a good step toward curing this chronic problem.

I worked as a COVID RN for Legacy Health Meridian Park, on 9/30/2021 they put 794 staff (including me) on LOA for not taking the vaccine. Also, on 9/30/21 Legacy closed 3 imaging, 4 labs, & 4 urgent care locations. Why? Because of their poor decision to not allow any religious or medical exemptions from the COVID vaccine, it gets better.....they had no staffing plan! On 10/18/21 they eventually fired roughly 600 staff. On 10/21/21 Legacy found themselves in a self-imposed staffing crisis, so they decided to boost employee referral hire-on bonuses to "support staffing". Then in January of 2022 Legacy officials were quoted "with staffing shortages, Legacy Health officials said it's a no-win situation that led them to make a tough decision." WHAT was that decision?.....Legacy allowed COVID-POSITIVE employees to return to work!!!

I had many friends who got fired from Legacy, they then decided to become travel nurses. Because Oregon is not part of the compact these people w/ baby's, sole providers, & immigrants had missed several paychecks applying for a compact license to other states.

The above paragraph's clearly points how insane it is for Oregon to not be involved in a Nurse Licensure Compact. By being part of the compact Oregon could have had quick access to staffing from out of state nurses. They didn't have to bleed money, they didn't have to expose sick people to COVID positive staff members, & people would not have missed paychecks!! Most all states during COVID needed RN help, but the states that received that help were the ones who are part of the Nurse Licensure Compact.

I read an opposition to this bill that said something along the lines of OR shouldn't be involved in this compact because OR holds higher nursing standards. This is absurd, nursing is universal, the human body and how it works does not change because of a state border. I went to nursing school in AZ, did my practicum in WA, and then

eventually started my RN career in OR. The only difference I saw was different policies from hospital to hospital, there was no quality difference of an RN from one state to another.

Representative Travis Nelson who is a voting member of this bill and a RN is quoted directly on his homepage of his campaign website saying, "I am running for State Rep because I believe that healthcare is a human right, and that Oregon can lead the way by assuring that all of its citizens have healthcare". Representative Nelson, in order to achieve this priority, you need to help fix the staffing issues! Rep Nelson, if you vote no on HB 2408 you are in direct conflict with your publicly quoted priority. I also see that Rep Nelson has been endorsed by the Oregon Nursing Association (ONA). ONA is against HB 2408. Rep Nelson has a real challenge here (politics over patients), does he go along with his top priority ("assuring citizens have healthcare") by fixing staffing issues, even when it is in direct conflict to what his beloved union is greedily doing.

Right now, on ONA's website it says, "hospitals are dangerously short-staffed." They erroneously blame "corporate greed". ONA wants to keep the monopoly on OR nurses, they want to keep the money w/in their organization.....more out of state nurses equals less actual OR nurses paying into ONA dues. THIS is the height of "corporate greed" (money over patients).

Even the OR Employment Dept is telling you to vote YES. Thier 2021 job vacancy survey showed that RN's had the 7th most open positions.

Thank you
Josie Alexander RN