

Submitter: Erin McNamara

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Erin McNamara
4523 NE 88th Ave
Portland, OR 97220

February 25, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Erin McNamara and I am a nurse at OHSU in the labor and delivery unit and previously in the Emergency Department.

I am one of countless nurses who staffed Oregon's hospitals and clinics throughout the worst of the COVID pandemic. We risked our lives and the well-being of our loved ones when asked to show up and work with inadequate PPE. We worked countless hours of overtime, sacrificed our own sense of safety, and some of us lost our lives. We did this not out of a desire to be lauded as "healthcare heroes" but because we care deeply about the safety and well-being of our patients. We knew that if we didn't show up, people would die. Nurses showing up to work is a matter of life or death, so we show up. Safe staffing is also a matter of life and death, and we nurses are asking you to show up and pass legislation that protects our patients and protects us. Hospital administrations have demonstrated again and again that their priority is profit, not patient safety. We cannot rely on the goodwill of money-making institutions to ensure that safe nurse to patient ratios are maintained. We need strong and binding legislation to give nurses that support we need to help our patients. Without enough nurses, without adequate rest and meal breaks, we cannot do our jobs.

Please protect Oregonians and the nurses that care for them by passing HB 2697

Thank you,
Erin McNamara