

Raimonda Skeryte
5130 SE 60th Ave
Portland, OR 97206

February 26, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Raimonda Skeryte and I am a nurse at Oregon Health & Science University Hospital in the Medical Intensive Care Unit.

The work environment and the increasing turnover rate for bedside nurses at my hospital are extremely troubling. Almost every shift, we are understaffed, and we frequently do not have enough staff to ensure we get our legally required breaks. It is not uncommon that traveling nurses comprise more than half of the team while the core staff is leaving at an alarming rate. Working long shifts of 12 hours or more, without a break or lunch, is exhausting and dangerous for nurses and patients. As a profession, we are burning out at an unprecedented rate.

Staffing shortages existed in Oregon long before the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has made already existing staffing issues more serious. Overworked and underpaid Oregon healthcare workers are now fleeing for safer working conditions, better pay, or simply leaving the nursing profession altogether due to the crisis. For more than a decade, nurses and other healthcare workers have asked hospital executives and managers for help. HB 2697 seeks to address many of the root causes of this crisis including requiring minimum safe nurse staffing and enforcement of legally required rest and meal breaks. The problem in Oregon is not that we don't have enough nurses. The problem is we don't have enough nurses who are willing to work in these conditions. Please help nurses and our patients by passing HB 2697.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Skeryte', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raimonda Skeryte