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RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Whitney Welborn and I am a nurse at OHSU in the Labor and Delivery department.

We care for, arguably, some of the most complex and dangerous pregnancies in the Pacific Northwest. This includes not just severe preeclamptic patients, but patients with complicated heart conditions, bleeding disorders, etc. that make birth very dangerous.

All patients deserve to be cared for in hospitals with safe staffing, but for a hospital like ours, receiving patients from so many other facilities that don't have the ability to care for such complex patients, the last thing we should be concerned about is maintaining a basic, baseline staffing ratio.

I have been a nurse for OHSU labor and delivery for three and a half years, and most weeks I receive texts from the unit, day and night, requesting more nurses. I go to most of my shifts already filled with anxiety because I've been receiving text messages every few hours leading up to my shift, begging for volunteers to come help, so I know I'm walking into yet another understaffed shift.

I recently trained to be a charge nurse for our unit, and for the first time since I started nursing, I am seriously considering leaving the job I love. This job is my passion and I absolutely love my work, the other nurses I get to work beside, and our patients. The idea of leaving is devastating to me. But watching patient safety be risked daily for the benefit of hospital profit is worse. Risking my license because of dangerous situations I am forced into because of consistently inadequate staffing is no longer worth it. I've watched other amazing nurses leave for the same reason, and it hurts our patients, the hospital, and all of the nurses.

It's so simple. We shouldn't have to fight for this.

Sincerely,

Whitney Welborn