

Submitter: Bridget Lovelace

On Behalf Of: ONA

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Good afternoon Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members

My name is Bridget Lovelace and I have been a nurse for over sixteen years. I am here to urge support for House Bill 2697.

Nurses keep patients safe through monitoring of their status, through offering suggestions, challenging unsafe practices and behaviors, and from assessing the needs of the patient and intervening to provide for those needs, or to prevent harm to the patient.

I have countless stories about risks of patient harm from understaffing. It feels like understaffing is the expectation in healthcare. One night, I had eight patients in the surgical unit on a night shift. All patients' needs were very high, and I had no time to do anything but respond to immediate patient issues and pull medications out from the dispensing machine. With this many patients it was completely impossible for me to give all my patients their medications to meet the standard of medications being given within an hour of being due. I was angry because of my failure to be able to take care of my patients in a manner they deserve to be taken care of. I was angry I felt set up to fail. My time in healthcare has reinforced this experience over and over to the thousandth degree. So many of the practices to prevent errors, to enhance the care we give, and to allow us to care for patients effectively goes completely out the window as hospitals increasingly press for tighter staffing on the floor.

Here is how understaffing plays out: I was prepping a patient with severe gastrointestinal bleeding for a treatment to attempt to stop the bleeding while working in the Progressive Care Unit. There were no CNAs available, and my fellow nurses each had their own overfull assignments and were busy caring for their patients. I cannot overstate how uncomfortable this patient was for hours resting in their own fluids, unable to get out of bed. This did not have to happen if we were better staffed.

To continue in the profession under current conditions, nurses must learn not to care about their patients' well-being. We are so rushed with our high patient caseloads that our bedside time with each patient is next to none. No patient deserves a nurse who no longer cares, no patient wants a nurse who is disengaged, burnt out and unsupported. I will not work as a nurse before I will be that nurse, and I love nursing. I will someday be one of those patients. As will you, and every person that you love. As well as every person you pass on the street. We need help to protect patients and our workforce. The nurses in Oregon need support in allowing them the care they

need to provide care for their patients.

HB 2697 will help do this. Thank you.