

Kassidy Lake
February 27, 2023

RE: RN Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Kassidy Lake and I am a nurse at OHSU in the Labor & Delivery unit.

When I entered the nursing profession over eight years ago, I left for work most nights feeling highly anxious and unsettled. At the time, I primarily attributed those feelings to being a new graduate nurse and the nature of the work itself. While it is true that labor & delivery is an intense environment, I now have the experience to also understand that I was providing care during understaffed and therefore unsafe, highly stressful conditions. The consensus among our nurses is that we are often just barely getting by. This reality is unacceptable knowing we have the lives of pregnant people and their babies in our hands. Working in such an environment continues to be damaging to my own well-being and the well-being of patients.

The level of burnout and moral injury myself and my peers are experiencing is at an all time high. Many nurses are leaving the work environment or profession itself in search of better working conditions. Considering we care for Oregon's most complex obstetric patients at OHSU, the loss of experienced nurses is detrimental to patients and the community. We require adequate staffing not only to provide at minimum safe care, but also to retain *experienced* nurses to care for an increasingly complex obstetric population and train future nurses.

Throughout my nursing career, I have proudly witnessed fellow nurses fight for safe staffing, but it feels like a losing battle without the means necessary to hold hospitals accountable. Time and again, nurses plead for help from administration only to be met with resistance. Profits are clearly of paramount importance to hospital administration.

Please support HB 2697 and give nurses what they really need: help in the form of binding legislation. We show up for our patients and we are asking that you show up for our community by passing legislation that allows for accountability and enforcement.

Sincerely,

Kassidy Lake, RN, BSN