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Senate Committee on Health Care

**RE: SB60**

Dear Senators:

Thank you for your service. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 60, prohibiting the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) from requiring nationally certified paramedics to possess an associate degree to be licensed in Oregon. The current OHA requirement for an associate degree directly affects the citizens in our area by limiting the staffing pool for ambulance providers/companies, especially in Eastern Oregon. The city of Ontario borders Idaho, where the pool of nationally licensed paramedics is much greater than in rural Eastern Oregon. Ontario Fire and Rescue and the community we serve rely on the expertise of paramedics regularly. The drastic rise in Fentanyl overdoses alone has dramatically increased the number of critical emergencies in our response area. Medical emergencies such as overdoses, cardiac emergencies, and traumatic injuries are commonplace, and require the skills possessed by paramedics. Our community relies heavily on their expertise and skillsets daily.

The requirement for a nationally licensed paramedic to possess an associate degree does not create better or more apt paramedics. The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) certification process is a high standard to meet and creates competent paramedics who are able to practice in all states with the exception of Oregon. Malheur County's ambulance service provider, Treasure Valley Paramedics, has been severely affected by this unreasonable requirement, which has resulted in burned out staff and other challenges that directly affect our community. Their staffing challenges could be alleviated if Senate Bill 60 passes by opening the staffing pool of competent, professional paramedics living nearby.

Please pass Senate Bill 60. Many Oregon residents will be positively affected by its passage, especially when lives hang in the balance.

Respectfully,

Clint Benson  
Fire Chief