

Submitter: Christopher Rourke  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB60

I have been in EMS for over twenty years. I received my paramedic training in Virginia through a certificate program. When I moved here in 2011, I had over a decade of experience in EMS. In Virginia, I frequently felt like I was one of the top medics in the agencies I worked. When I arrived here, I was shocked to realize I was no longer the smartest person in the room, in fact I was very much average compared to my peers in Oregon, despite my years of experience. I attribute this to the high standards set by the OHA and the degree requirement.

My job is a pretty difficult this one these days. I realize that there is a shortage of medics, but in state, and nationwide. This shortage isn't because it's too difficult to become a medic, it's because it's too difficult to stay a medic due the working conditions we face. I can say though that the best thing about my job is my coworkers. They are dedicated, and skilled to a degree that I never saw on the east coast.

Please don't allow our standards to slip. And please remember that the current OHA policy doesn't mandate an associates degree for everyone, just for new medics. Those with three years of experience in the field (like I had) can still receive reciprocity.

Overruling the OHA will dilute our workforce with paramedics that are under educated, fresh out of 'medic mill' programs that require as little as six months of training. This would be a betrayal to our existing workforce that has invested so much of themselves to their education and their job over the past few years, while lowering the standard of care Oregonians receive.