

Submitter: Valdez Bravo
On Behalf Of: Self
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Testimony to Joint Ways and Means Committee
Co-Chairs: Senator Elizabeth Steiner and Representative Tawna Sanchez
Portland Community College
April 8, 2023

Honorable Co-Chairs, Steiner and Sanchez, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask for your support of Senate Bill 1089, which will fund a governance board to build on the work of the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care.

Although I am submitting testimony on behalf of myself as an individual, my perspective is informed by my experience as a LatinX, Indigenous Oregonian who grew up in Salem; as an Army Veteran; as a dual Masters-trained healthcare professional with over 25 years in the field; as the Interim Director of the Multnomah County Health Department; as President of the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE); and as Vice President of Health Care for All Oregon (HCAO), a 501c(3).

We don't have a health care "system" - we have a highly fragmented landscape of public and private; for-profit, not-for-profit, county, state, and federal health care systems with a variety of funding mechanisms.

I am at tables where the challenges of our current healthcare "system" are laid bare: workforce shortages; the Great Resignation and premature loss of longtime healthcare providers; a lack of coordination across systems; ad hoc coordinating agencies created to knit local hospital groups and care deliverers together; a lack of unified health records; costly band-aid approaches to sharing health record information and images; and insurance and billing systems that need constant upgrade and maintenance.

As the President of Oregon ACHE, I have been in conversations with fellow Directors, CEOs, and other senior healthcare leaders who are also frustrated with the state of health care today. We have discussed how COVID has demonstrated the need for hospitals to work in partnership as part of a collective whole in order to meet the needs of our communities.

Finally, as the Vice President of HCAO, I have heard from countless members of our communities across Oregon on how they have been harmed by the current

healthcare “system” due to economic barriers, the financial burden of care received, or a lack of access to comprehensive care.

Our healthcare system is on fire.

The “system” is on unsolid ground and everyday Oregonians will continue to pay the price until something structural is done to address it. I know that legislative leaders are faced with hundreds of high priority problems to solve each legislative session. For all the reasons I have laid out in this letter, and countless more, I believe that supporting SB1089 and funding this Governance Board will be the equivalent of not just tackling one big problem - but potentially dozens if not hundreds of problems.

With so many constituents and stakeholders ready for change, this is the moment to lead Oregon’s health care transformation. I encourage the Joint Ways and Means Committee to fund and establish the Universal Health Plan Governance Board, and to direct the Board to create a comprehensive plan for implementing a Universal Health Plan beginning in 2027.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Valdez G. Bravo, FACHE
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