



April 20, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Rules

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for SB 1089

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1089. My name is Emerson Hamlin, and I am a political organizer for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 16,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, and county health departments across Oregon.

Our nurses see the many inequities in health care across Oregon: individuals with more resources are likely to go to the doctor for preventive care and when they first experience troubling symptoms. Those with fewer resources, including individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, are far more likely to wait to get care. Often, when they finally seek care, they require more intensive, expensive treatment that is more disruptive to their and their families' lives. This system is not only weakening families and our communities, but it impacts providers as well. Consistently seeing individuals who need care go without it creates moral injury, because our nurses fundamentally believe that everyone deserves to receive the health care they need, when they need it. One nurse shared with me that making sure her patients received necessary care was emotionally exhausting, and the uncertainty that they would be able to receive care in a timely matter kept her up at night. Our providers deserve better.

SB 1089 is an exciting bill to move us towards a publicly funded, universal health care system for the state of Oregon. For consumers, such a system will open the door to seeing providers when they need to, creating healthier families and stronger communities. For providers, it means that they can focus on their core goal: keeping Oregonians healthy. ONA urges your support of SB 1089. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

Political Organizer at Oregon Nurses Association