

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Nelson and Goodwin, and Members of the Committee:

I am Charlie Swanson, from Eugene, and I am writing in support of SB 703.

SB 703 is intended to help expand and diversify the workforce of certified nursing assistants. This provides an opportunity to improve access to the CNA profession at a time when Oregon has a significant need for healthcare professionals at all levels, and it can help build a linguistically diverse healthcare workforce.

The current examination process in Oregon for CNA licensure is biased against linguistically diverse candidates who are from the non-dominant language group. The current system is at odds with stated diversity, equity and access goals of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). OHA has made a commitment to improving access to healthcare for more diverse groups. It also recognizes that to do this successfully Oregon needs to have healthcare workers who are linguistically and culturally diverse. SB 703 will help achieve this vision.

SB 703 will also put Oregonians who wish to become certified nursing assistants on equal footing with candidates from other states. Those candidates, with proper training and experience, can become certified in another state and then get certified in Oregon because of reciprocity. The certification exam process that allows them to be certified in that other state, and thus in Oregon, is what SB 703 would allow to take place in Oregon. It is ironic that we currently make it more difficult for Oregonians to become certified than those from other states.

Thank you for considering SB 703, and thanks for your efforts to support an expanded and diversified health care workforce.

Charlie Swanson'  
Eugene, Oregon