



Dental Assisting National Board

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of this committee. For the record, my name is Katherine Landsberg, and I am the Director of Government Relations with the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 3223.

This written testimony contains supplemental information that, in the interest of time, I omitted from my oral testimony.

DANB is the national American Dental Association-recognized certification board for dental assistants. DANB is known nationally and in Oregon as an expert in developing and administering high-quality knowledge-based assessments for dental assistants, as a trusted partner to state regulators in helping them meet their public protection objectives, and as a provider of information, resources, and data to those studying the dental assisting profession. Currently, 37 states and D.C. require or recognize DANB exams and certifications for dental assistants to qualify to perform specified duties. DANB administers the exams that would be eliminated if this bill passes.

It should come as no surprise that DANB agrees with the Oregon stakeholders who oppose this bill. Dental assistants were not invited to give input into this measure, which affects their profession and their livelihood, prior to its introduction in the legislature. Dental assistants, who as a group have the fewest resources and can least afford to take time away from work for legislative testimony, came out in force to oppose this bill at the House hearing and many were in Salem again last Wednesday, this past Monday, and again today to make their opposition known.

I would also direct your attention to a letter signed by 29 Oregon dentists who oppose both this bill and House Bill 2996, because they feel the bills will place a greater burden on dentists, diminish their productivity and capacity, and reduce the quality of patient care.

As with House Bill 2996, this bill removes objective standards and expects the board of dentistry to issue a certification to a dental assistant authorizing them to perform critical intraoral tasks on patients based on one dentist's opinion about whether they are qualified, and that simply is not a valid or legally defensible basis for certification.

Removing dental assisting exams will not alleviate the workforce shortage. The most effective way to sustainably solve it is investing in the education of the future workforce and working together with stakeholders to establish dental assisting as an attractive profession where people are compensated well, treated with respect, and have opportunities for growth.

We need to create a highly skilled and highly competent dental assisting workforce, so that dentists and hygienists can work at the top of their license and together the dental team can provide optimal care to more patients.

Instead of supporting long-term growth and sustainability, this bill dismantles the dental assisting career ladder and weakens the profession, which will inevitably attract fewer new candidates and disincentivize the dental assistants you already have.

I urge you vote no on this proposal and to work together with stakeholders in Oregon to find a better way forward.

I look forward to any questions and I thank you for your time and attention.