Chair Patterson, Co-chair Hayden and members of the Senate Committee On Health Care,

My name is Odalis Aguilar and a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME. Oregon AFSCME believes in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families. We represent over 33,000 workers in the public sector. We enthusiastically extend our support for HB 3320A which would ensure eligible patients get access to financial assistance.

While we engage day to day with our members directly, we know that our work does not only affect their daily lives but those of their children, partners, and can have long lasting effects. Access to healthcare for families can be difficult, even more so for low-income families who face life-threatening medical emergencies can happen without warning, resulting in tens-of-thousands of dollars in debt. Navigating the healthcare system can be complicated and hope that providers are doing their part in helping families access resources when they most need it.

As one way to alleviate this burden and live up to their charitable missions, nonprofit hospitals are required by federal and state law to provide assistance by reducing or eliminating medical bills for patients who can't afford them. We applaud the work our members are doing at Oregon Health and Science University where patients are screened for all elegibility benefits before the bill arrives to their doorstep. Nonprofit hospitals are required by federal and state law to provide assistance by reducing or eliminating medical bills for patients who can't afford them, yet, we still hear stories of Oregonians not being offered resources available to them which can cause devastating financial consequences.

It's time for all nonprofit hospitals to abide by the same minimum standards and ensure they uphold their obligations to patients and communities while also increasing transparency about hospital financial assistance practices. We kindly urge your support HB 3320A.

Odalis Aguilar Aguilar
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME