



February 5, 2024

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

For the record, my name is David Lynch, I am the President of AFSCME Local 3295, the Oregon State Hospital Nurses. I've been with the state hospital for 13 years and am part of a big OSH family that's doing the best it can to help our patients to get the resources and help they need. I want to share my full support for HB 4045 which creates a new "Hazardous" category within PERS for employees of the Oregon State Hospital who have direct contact with patients and 911 operators who directly work with or manage emergency or traumatic events in the regular course of work. This bill has various components but I want to shed light on one specific portion which directly impacts the life of my coworkers who are also your state employees.

The work we perform at OSH is unique and comes with its own challenges. We care about our patients and want to show up for them in every way that we can to make sure they learn the necessary skills in order to reintegrate them into their communities. There are countless stories about workers being injured while on the job due to outbreaks from patients due to their behavioral issues, yet, many of these workers return to their jobs and show up for patients. Our jobs are not easy and without many incentives, I can see why recruitment is difficult.

HB 4045 could help with these efforts. By creating this new category for OSH and 911 telecommunicators, we could attract folks into the workforce who engage 24/7 in work that is high risk and causes high stress.

I strongly urge your support and appreciate your consideration for this bill. HB 4045 would not only help recruit new people into this field, but it would also retain workers who feel burnt out. My co-workers and I have shown up through the last couple of years and the pandemic has exacerbated the staffing crisis. This bill would not only be a boost of morale, but it would also make us feel seen and heard.

Thank you for your time,

David Lynch