



Testimony in support of House Bill 3220 with -2 amendment

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3220. My name is Brett Rowlett, and I am Executive Director of External Affairs at Lane Community College. We are proud to host Oregon's largest two-year nursing program, graduating over 100 registered and licensed practical nurses annually to meet our state's critical healthcare workforce needs.

I am here to speak in support of House Bill 3220, with the -2 amendments, and to thank Representative Nancy Nathanson for her leadership and collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen this important legislation.

At Lane, the demand for our nursing program far exceeds our current capacity. This year, we received 170 applications for our RN program but were only able to accept 86 students. Similarly, 40 individuals applied to our LPN program, and just 16 were admitted. These numbers, combined with our state's nursing shortage, illustrates the need to address capacity challenges, including those driven by faculty-to-student ratio requirements.

Many states have already demonstrated that higher faculty-to-student ratios can be implemented safely. For example, Washington operates with a 10-to-1 ratio. However, we believe the best approach is to empower individual programs, faculty and local providers to determine the appropriate ratios based on specific clinical environments.

Flexibility is key. Each clinical setting presents unique variables—patient acuity, staffing levels, and even day-to-day challenges like new hire training or overall patient loads. Faculty, who are experts in clinical nursing and student evaluation, are best positioned to assess how many students they can supervise safely and effectively in a given setting. For instance, a high-paced setting like a hospital neurology department may require smaller ratios, while a long-term care facility might better accommodate a 10-to-1 ratio. Adaptability ensures that care quality and educational standards are upheld.

Our nursing faculty are already tasked with evaluating students on their ability to deliver safe and effective care, a responsibility governed by the Oregon State Board of Nursing and national accreditation standards. Providing flexibility in ratios ensures that faculty can continue to uphold these high standards while expanding capacity to meet workforce demands.

Supporting HB 3220 with the -2 amendments is an important step toward addressing Oregon's nursing shortage while maintaining safety and educational rigor. Thank you for considering this important legislation, and I urge your yes vote.