

Submitter: Brian Mitchell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2591

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2591, a bill that aims to stabilize the anesthesiology workforce in Oregon. I am physician specialized in anesthesiology who trained at OHSU and has worked in Oregon since I completed my training in 2010. I currently train OHSU physicians, medical students and student registered nurse anesthetists who are effectively the most importantly clinicians that we can retain to become the future healthcare leaders in our state. Unfortunately, many of them are immediately leaving Oregon after training because of the economic barriers that exist here relative to other states. We are at a staffing shortage tipping point in surgical and procedural care in our state which cannot be done without anesthesia care.

In my anesthesia group we are currently short staffed with unfilled anesthesiologist and CRNA positions. At least one anesthesiologist in my group is currently obtaining a license to practice medicine in another state in preparation for moving. Given our existing shortage, the loss of this anesthesiologist will immediately impact our ability to provide care for Oregonians.

Across the country there is a significant increase in demand for anesthesia services due to a multitude of factors including an aging population and an increase in procedures performed outside of an operating room that require anesthetic care. Based upon both the data collected by the Oregon Society of Anesthesiologists and my personal conversations with anesthesiologists and CRNAs, many are looking to leave Oregon. There are both internal economic headwinds in Oregon and a plethora of higher paying jobs located outside of the state.

This bill contains critical measures to turn Oregon into a financially attractive state for physicians and CRNAs. By investing in anesthesiologists and CRNAs, we are ensuring that Oregonians have the clinicians needed to care for them in the operating rooms, ICUs, cardiology catheter labs, GI suites, dental clinics and surgery centers. This is a critical investment in the healthcare for all Oregonians.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Brian Mitchell, MD