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Testimony in Support of Hospitals Revealing Replacement Worker Cost

To the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2792.

As a healthcare provider I am uniquely invested in the health and welfare of the community that I serve, as are all healthcare providers. We take professional oaths that we all strive to honor. When the path to upholding our professional ethics is altered by employers for the sake of profits vs quality patient care, we are duty-bound to take a stand in support of our patients.

The decision to strike is not made lightly. As a current ONA bargaining member, I can confidently tell you that the decision to withhold labor is a last resort after months of (unpaid) bargaining. In Oregon we have seen historic strikes taking place at our hospitals. Strikes that are about: safe staffing ratios, getting appropriate lunch/breaks, wages to retain skilled senior staff for continuity of care, healthcare benefits for healthcare providers and their families. The longer a strike goes on, the greater the risk of poor health outcomes (particularly in emergent situations) is to our communities. Other hospitals must absorb the extra patient load during a strike. Other hospitals that also operate understaffed at baseline.

If hospitals had to divulge how much they are paying replacement workers during a strike, it would add a level of transparency that is much needed at the bargaining table. If a hospital states that they can't afford: living wages for staff, healthcare with < \$6,000 deductible, increased staffing to meet required safety ratios, retro pay to cover the time the employer stalled in getting a fair contract... they should be prepared to show the finances that make this so. Nobody wants to bankrupt our hospitals. But if they are saying at the bargaining table that they "can't afford" to make movement on these issues, but then turn around and spend that money on replacement workers, it proves their refusal to bargain in good faith. We cannot let the greed of large hospitals put the health and welfare of our communities at risk.

Our communities cannot afford to see hospitals strike every year because of the one sided power grab. Please help keep healthcare providers at work, and keep hospitals accountable for their decisions. Please vote in favor of HB 2792.