

Submitter: Oregon Nurse
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2792

RE: Support for HB 2792

To the House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards,

I am writing my testimony today since I am unable to make it in person today as a proud member of the Providence Milwaukie team for the past 5 years. During this time, I have witnessed both the profound impact we, as nurses, have on our community and the struggles we endure every single day due to understaffing and under-resourcing. As healthcare providers, we dedicate ourselves to our patients, always striving for compassionate, patient-centered care. But the sad truth is that the very system that claims to value us is causing harm—harm to us as caregivers, harm to our patients, and harm to our communities.

Every day, nurses, environmental staff, and other employees work tirelessly under impossible circumstances. I've seen the effects of being overworked—colleagues stretched thin, exhausted, and dealing with the trauma of caring for patients with little to no resources to meet their needs. A prime example of this is the emergency department, which has been struggling for months due to high patient volumes, limited beds, and understaffing.

Then, the night before the strike was set to begin, something shocking happened. Providence suddenly brought in extra support, and resources specifically to clear out the hospital. Patients who had been waiting for weeks or even months to be discharged were suddenly able to go home, relieving the burden on the Emergency Department and the entire hospital. This made it painfully clear: Providence is capable of so much more, but only when it benefits them. It took a strike to make them act, but this type of resource mobilization should be the standard, not the exception.

This sudden shift in resources, after so much time spent under strain, was a blow to my heart. It demonstrated that, when necessary, Providence can pull together the resources to care for the community—but this same level of urgency and commitment is not extended to their own employees. They don't even care if I have good healthcare benefits, wow!!

I remember a moment not too long ago when we lost a patient—someone whose life could have been saved if our team had been fully staffed. Research has repeatedly

shown that understaffing leads to poor outcomes for both patients and caregivers, and this loss weighed heavily on all of us. But instead of addressing the systemic issues, Providence focused its efforts on bringing in strikebreakers, covering their expenses, while neglecting the very people who are here every day, giving everything for our community.

This is about more than just financials; it's about human lives. The fact that Providence is willing to invest heavily in temporary staff while not providing the same level of support to its existing, dedicated employees speaks volumes about the value placed on profit over people.

I am proud of the care we provide, but it is heartbreaking to see how little regard is given to the well-being of the caregivers that are crucial to providence functionality . I am asking for transparency—financial transparency that shows where the money is going, and why the resources are not being used to support those of us who have committed our careers and hearts to this work.

We deserve better. The community deserves better.
Oregon Nurse