

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

After working in healthcare for 20 years I believe it is outrageous that in Oregon hospitals and health systems spend extravagantly on replacement workforces, with money that could be spent on a fair contract for staff nurses.

We should know the extent of hospital employer avoidance of spending productively towards a fair contract.

Healthcare workers go on strike in service of the populations we serve and in concern for the quality of this Oregon healthcare system on which we all rely. Strikes are chosen only when necessary when the employer absolutely refuses to prioritize safety, workers' voice, and core concerns for healthcare sustainability like recruitment and retention.

When a strike occurs, hospital systems tend to blame the workers for straining hospital operations, workforce morale, and transparency. Hospitals often spend significant resources to manage strikes and lockouts, yet these expenditures are not often reported, leaving the financial and ethical implications of hospital spending veiled from staff nurses and other workers. This lack of accountability undermines trust between hospitals, employees, and the public.

HB 2792 shines a light where bad-actor hospital employers prefer to operate in the dark. The bill requires financial reports that include recruitment, advertising, and compensation costs, and must be updated every 30 days during a strike and finalized within 30 days of a strike ending.

This policy contributes to hospitals having to answer for their impact on their workers, the public, and their own bottom line.

Oregonians deserve to know how their money is spent—especially if it's being misspent. Our hospitals and health systems are community resources which rely on our tax dollars and tax exemptions. As our health systems expand and Oregonians' healthcare becomes more expensive, our community needs more information to perform our oversight responsibilities and ensure the benefits today's healthcare systems provide outweigh the bills they charge.

Thank you,
Carrie Cole