

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

Testimony in Support of HB 2792

Submitted to the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

By: Robert Schwartz, Registered Nurse at Providence Milwaukie Hospital

Date: February 10, 2025

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Robert Schwartz, and I have been a registered nurse at Providence Milwaukie Hospital for 1.5 years. Today, I write to you not just as a nurse, but as a frontline healthcare worker who has dedicated my career to serving the patients and families of this community.

Since January 10, I have been on strike alongside my colleagues—not because we want to, but because we must. The conditions that led us to this point are not just about wages, but about staffing shortages, unsafe patient loads, and the integrity of our healthcare system. Nurses like me are sounding the alarm because when hospitals refuse to invest in us, they are refusing to invest in safe, quality patient care.

What is outrageous is that instead of using their vast resources to negotiate a fair contract with us—nurses who have spent years serving these hospitals—Providence and other health systems choose to spend millions on temporary strike replacements. These funds could and should be spent on retaining the experienced, dedicated nurses who are the backbone of Oregon's hospitals.

This is why House Bill 2792 is so important.

Oregonians deserve transparency. Hospitals often claim that strikes are disruptive to operations, morale, and patient care—yet they fail to disclose the vast sums they spend to hire temporary workers. HB 2792 will force hospital employers to report their spending on strike replacements so that the public, policymakers, and healthcare workers can see the full picture of where resources are truly going.

If our hospitals can afford to pay exorbitant fees to temporary staffing agencies, then they can afford to invest in a fair contract that retains experienced nurses and protects patient safety.

HB 2792 will ensure:

Financial accountability for hospitals that prioritize profit over patient care.

Public transparency so Oregonians know how their hospitals are spending money.

A more sustainable healthcare system by discouraging reckless spending on short-term fixes rather than long-term workforce investments.

I urge this committee to pass HB 2792 so that hospital employers can no longer operate in the shadows. The public deserves to know the truth, and Oregon's nurses deserve better.

Thank you for your time and for considering this crucial piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Robert Schwartz

Registered Nurse, Providence Milwaukie Hospital