

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

Dear Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2792, which requires hospitals to report the amount they spend on recruiting and paying individuals to replace striking workers during a strike or lockout. This bill is critical for ensuring transparency and accountability in Oregon's healthcare system, and I urge you to pass it without delay. It is absolutely outrageous that hospitals and health systems in Oregon continue to spend extravagantly on replacement workforces during labor disputes, especially when these resources could be better spent negotiating a fair contract for staff nurses. By funneling money into replacement workers, hospital systems are avoiding productive spending that could go toward improving wages, benefits, and working conditions for nurses who are dedicated to providing care to our communities. This is money that could directly improve the recruitment and retention of skilled healthcare workers—issues that are crucial to the long-term sustainability of our healthcare system.

Healthcare workers go on strike not for personal gain, but in service to the populations we care for and out of concern for the quality of Oregon's healthcare system. Strikes are not decisions taken lightly, but rather are a last resort when the employer refuses to prioritize safety, workers' voices, and the core concerns that are essential for a sustainable healthcare system, including recruitment and retention. Yet when strikes occur, hospitals often shift the blame onto the workers, claiming that we are straining hospital operations, workforce morale, and transparency. Hospitals regularly invest significant resources to manage strikes and lockouts, yet these expenditures are rarely reported. This lack of financial transparency shields the public and employees from understanding the true cost of these decisions, as well as the ethical implications of such spending. Without accountability, the trust between hospitals, employees, and the public continues to erode.

HB 2792 will shine a necessary light on hospital spending during strikes. The bill requires hospitals to report their financial expenditures on recruitment, advertising, and compensation of replacement workers, and to update these reports every 30 days during a strike, with a final report due within 30 days after the strike concludes. This simple measure will provide much-needed oversight and transparency, ensuring that hospital employers are held accountable for their actions and their impact on workers, the public, and the healthcare system at large.

Oregonians deserve to know how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent—especially when those dollars are being misspent. Our hospitals and health systems are community resources that rely on taxpayer funding and tax exemptions. As healthcare costs continue to rise and hospital systems expand, the public needs

more information to ensure that these systems are working for the benefit of all Oregonians and that the services provided justify the high costs we bear. I strongly urge you to support HB 2792. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring fairness, accountability, and transparency in the healthcare system that Oregonians rely on.

Sincerely,
Denise Herrington
Registered Nurse, Providence St Vincent Hospital