



February 10, 2025

To: Chair Grayber
Vice Chair Elmer
Representative Munoz
Representative Boshart Davis
Representative Fragala
Representative Nelson
Representative Scharf

Fr: Matt Swanson, Political Strategist

Re: Support for HB 2792

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer and Members of the Committee:

Testimony in Support of HB 2792

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Swanson, and I am here representing the more than 85,000 members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Our members are the backbone of Oregon's healthcare system, working in acute care hospitals, long-term care settings, public agencies, schools, and home- and community-based services. From cradle to grave, head to toe, we provide the care Oregonians depend on.

I am here today to urge your support for **HB 2792**, which would bring much-needed **transparency** to the costs associated with replacing striking or locked-out healthcare workers. Specifically, this bill would require hospitals to **report the amount spent on recruiting and paying replacement workers** during a labor dispute—including recruitment, advertising, and compensation costs—updated every 30 days throughout the dispute and finalized within 30 days after its resolution.

This legislation is critical because it shines a light on the financial decisions fueling Oregon's hospital staffing crisis. Instead of investing in permanent staff, many hospitals **spend exorbitant amounts on temporary replacements**, often at two to three times the wages of frontline caregivers like Certified Nursing Assistants—many living paycheck to paycheck, even after they were cheered for their efforts to care for Oregonians during the COVID-19 pandemic. These staffing agencies are frequently from out of state, with travel and lodging expenses covered on top of their inflated pay. **Workers are being told there's no money for fair wages, yet hospitals are funneling massive sums into stopgap solutions that fail to address the long-term crisis.**

A recent example underscores why transparency is essential. In October 2023, **more than 75,000 healthcare workers at Kaiser Permanente were forced to strike due to the company's bad-faith bargaining over critical staffing issues.** As Kaiser patients endured **long wait times** for care, executives refused to address the core issues. Instead, they

poured resources into temporary staffing, leaving both workers and patients to suffer the consequences.

As Audrey Cardenas Loera, a Kaiser fees and benefits support specialist, put it:

“Healthcare workers see how Kaiser patients are forced to wait unsafe lengths of time for cancer screenings, room assignments, test results, primary care appointments, x-rays, surgeries, waiting in emergency rooms, and more. We simply want our patients to be safe and get the care that they deserve.”

HB 2792 is not about stopping hospitals from hiring replacements—it’s about ensuring the public knows where healthcare dollars are going. Are hospitals truly investing in the stability of their workforce, or are they choosing costly short-term fixes at the expense of patient care? **Oregonians deserve to know.**

We also wish to commend Representative Nelson for his work to ensure more transparency in spending decisions by our health systems. HB 2793 would similarly require reporting for spending on so-called “union avoidance” strategies. Asante Health reported to the federal government that they spent only \$161,000 on union-busting efforts in 2023.¹ However, documents filed by the consultants themselves reveal that Asante actually paid over **\$1.1 million** to these consultants during the same period.² This level of misrepresentation and the enormous sums hospitals are investing in activities that do not benefit patient care underscore the necessity of accountability measures like those proposed in House Bill 2792 and 2793.

In addition, the National Labor Relations Board agreed that Asante’s efforts went outside the law. The board found that:

- Pro-union workers were illegally threatened with the loss of work schedules including ability to grant requests for time off.
- Asante posted illegal flyers in the workplace threatening that unionization would result in a loss of education and retirement benefits.
- Asante illegally prohibited pro-union discussions while encouraging anti-union discussions.

I urge your support for **HB 2792** to bring transparency, accountability, and ultimately better care to our communities. Thank you.

¹ [Asante’s LM10](#), which covers the period October 2022 through September 2023, discloses that Asante Rogue Regional contracted with one firm, Government Resources Consultants of America, that was paid \$160,962 on 07/07/2023.

² [LM21Form \(dol.gov\)](#) (Termination date: 06/09/2023), [LM21Form \(dol.gov\)](#) (Termination date: 05/10/23), [LM21Form \(dol.gov\)](#) (Termination date: 06/10/23), [LM21Form](#) (Termination date: 03/31/2023)