

Submitter: Amanda Miles  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2792  
February 12, 2025

To the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards:

I write this testimony in support of House Bill 2792. I work as a registered nurse at one of the eight Providence hospitals in Oregon where nurses are currently on strike. As of the writing of this letter, we have been on strike for 34 days.

House Bill 2792 would require Oregon hospitals to report the amount of funds they spend on recruiting and paying strike replacement workers during a work stoppage. In nursing, there is a specialty industry of sorts in which certain agencies recruit and provide staff specifically for strikes. The cost of this service for a hospital or system includes the wages of the strike replacement workers, and may include travel, food and lodging during the strike. In addition, the staffing agency receives a fee for providing these workers.

As you might suppose, this can add up to a considerable amount of money, depending on the size of the workforce being replaced and the length of the work stoppage. The issue is that we don't know exactly how much money. My understanding is that estimates have put Providence Health & Services of Oregon paying approximately \$25 million per week to fund these replacement workers. The workers receive premium pay -- roughly double that of Providence's own nurses, in addition to their hotels, flights and meals. If these estimates are accurate, that means Providence has paid somewhere in the vicinity of \$125 million and counting since the strike began. Notably, it would have cost Providence approximately \$40 million to retroactively pay its own staff who have been working on expired contracts (the additional pay these workers would have received had a new contract immediately followed the expiring one).

While the estimate is that Providence has spent about \$125 million thus far, we don't know the exact total, nor how it is paid. Legislation such as HB 2792 would provide transparency, which the people of Oregon deserve. Providence is a not-for-profit organization that provides healthcare to people across this state. It enjoys generous tax exemptions, it benefits from taxes paid for by Oregon citizens, and those same citizens also pay Providence their own hard-earned money for their healthcare. Therefore, this organization should be required to be transparent and accountable for

how it spends its money. The public deserves to know where Providence's money goes when it isn't being put toward fair contracts for Providence healthcare workers, the self-same people who live in our communities and care for Oregonians 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. When Providence releases statements to the media that the nurses union's proposals are "not financially sustainable," the people of this state deserve the clarity of understanding that Providence is paying considerably more to strike replacement workers and agencies than it does to its own employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important bill. I look forward to your support.

Sincerely

Amanda Miles, MA, BSN, RN, CNOR