



February 27, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for SB 476

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the committee:

My name is Emerson Hamlin, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA represents a diverse community of more than 21,000 nurses and health care professionals throughout Oregon. Together, we use our collective power to advocate for a more effective, affordable and accessible health care system; better working conditions for all health care professionals; and healthier communities.

Senate Bill 476 provides critically needed support for programs that will help with near-and long-term healthcare workforce development. Oregon has an aging population that will demand more from every sector in healthcare for decades to come. To meet this need, Oregon must support programs that remove barriers to entry experienced by immigrant and refugee workers.

SB 476 will provide grants that enable not-for-profit organizations, post-secondary institutions, and employers to provide career guidance and support services for immigrant and refugee workers, including education in industry-specific English, teaching relevant computer skills, and sharing resources for trauma-informed care. Oregonians will continue to become more diverse, and we need programs in place that support a healthcare workforce that reflects that diversity and delivers culturally competent care to all communities. Removing barriers to practice and offering meaningful support will provide a diverse workforce for our diverse population. SB 476 is one step towards a more equitable and accessible healthcare system.

ONA supports SB 476 because it is a sound investment in Oregon's workforce, especially the healthcare workforce. This legislation is needed to address urgent workforce gaps in a manner that is sustainable and equitable. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin