

February 27, 2025

**Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature**

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Olena Bilyk, and I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 476. As someone who has personally faced the challenges this bill seeks to address, I understand firsthand the struggles that highly educated and skilled refugees encounter when trying to continue their professional careers in the United States.

In Ukraine, I obtained a nursing education and later earned two higher education degrees—one in medicine, specializing as an oncologist, and the second in psychology. I dedicated years of my life to working in the medical field, providing care and support to those in need. However, when I arrived in the United States as a refugee with my elderly mother and two children, I found it nearly impossible to have my degrees recognized or to further my education due to the complex and costly accreditation system. Like many others in my situation, I had to focus on securing employment to support my family and build a new life in America, rather than being able to work in my trained profession.

I know that my story is not unique. Many refugees arriving in Oregon today have extensive education and professional experience but face significant barriers to re-entering their fields. These individuals are eager to contribute—not only to their families' well-being but also to their communities and to the United States as a whole. They want to do what they love, apply their skills, and serve in industries where their expertise is desperately needed, such as healthcare.

Senate Bill 476 would provide critical support to these professionals by removing unnecessary barriers and creating pathways for accreditation and employment. By investing in their potential, we are investing in a stronger, more diverse workforce that will benefit all Oregonians.

I urge you to support this bill and help ensure that talented and hardworking individuals like myself and so many others have the opportunity to fully contribute to the country that has given us refuge.

**Sincerely,
Olena Bilyk**

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