

Testimony in Support of SB 778
Representative Bobby Levy

February 26, 2025

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

My name is Bobby Levy and I am the State Representative for House District 58, which includes Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa Counties.

I am writing to you today in strong support of SB 778, a bill that will ensure fair and sustainable reimbursement rates for air ambulance services in Oregon's medical assistance program.

In rural communities like those I represent in Eastern Oregon, access to emergency medical services is a constant concern. Unlike urban areas where hospitals are just minutes away, our residents often live hours from the nearest medical facility. Not only are clinics and hospitals spread thin across our region, but when a patient requires advanced care—they must be transported hundreds of miles away to Boise, Portland, or beyond. In these cases, air ambulances are not just an option—they are the only way our residents survive.

However, the rising costs of maintaining these critical services, coupled with inadequate reimbursement rates, put immense financial strain on air ambulance providers. Without appropriate funding, these services risk being reduced or eliminated, leaving rural Oregonians without a lifeline in times of medical crisis. SB 778 ensures that reimbursement rates keep pace with inflation by aligning them with the national Ambulance Inflation Factor. This is a necessary step to provide financial stability for air ambulance providers and ensure they can continue serving the communities that need them most.

Rural Oregonians should not face worse health outcomes simply because of where they live. By passing SB 778, we can support the emergency response infrastructure that our communities rely on and ensure that every Oregonian—no matter their zip code—has access to timely, lifesaving medical transport.

I urge your support for this critical legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Levy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Representative Bobby Levy
House District 58