

Submitter: Michael Lepin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3380

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson

I am writing to you on behalf of Jefferson County Fire & EMS in support of HB 3572 and HB 3380, also known as EMS Modernization Phase 2. In 2010, advocates began to notice that without intervention, Oregon's EMS workforce and infrastructure would begin to face significant challenges. Around this time, the EMS Modernization Taskforce was created. This taskforce crafted proposals to address long-term solutions that fortify Oregon's EMS system. In 2024, HB 4081 was passed to begin to address the challenges Oregon's EMS system continues to face. Now, HB 3572 aims to build from HB 4081 to continue to serve Oregonians by addressing Oregon's paramedic and EMT workforce crisis, through a combination of long-term planning and short-term rural relief. HB 3572 provides:

- I. Technical fixes to HB 4081, passed in 2024.
- II. An EMS Mobilization Plan to allow for the redistribution of EMS resources around the state in a more streamlined way.
- III. Short-term workforce initiatives, with \$9M in appropriated funding, that provides EMS workforce relief, especially in rural areas. The EMS workforce is underfunded and understaffed, with some areas of the state having no EMS presence, these policies will help us stop the bleeding until a longer-term strategy comes into effect.
- IV. Requires the State EMS Program to create a 10-year strategic EMS plan in Oregon to provide a suite of long-term solutions to the EMS workforce and funding crisis, which will naturally replace our short-term solutions.

The cost of providing EMS in the rural and frontier regions are proving to be extremely difficult for these small agencies exist. The culture of volunteerism has dwindled over the decades, especially with the requirements to maintain licensure. We have seen neighboring agencies in Waso County and Wheeler County almost dissolve and we had to respond to their areas to assist, which takes our resources out of our community for lengthy periods of time unprotected. Fortunately, these two agencies have found some solutions. There are other agencies in the state that were not so successful and ended their service. I am hopeful that EMS Modernization will help find more long-term solutions to serve our Rural and Frontier communities.

I encourage you to vote in favor of HB 3572 and HB 3380, EMS Modernization Phase 2.

Sincerely,

Michael DK Lepin
Paramedic
Deputy Chief of EMS