



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

March 19, 2025

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Chair Representative Rob Nosse
Vice Chair Representative Cyrus Javadi
Vice Chair Representative Travis Nelson

For the record, my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. We represent over 3800 career fire fighters, paramedics, wild land and fire prevention personnel across the entire state of Oregon.

We are testifying in favor of House Bill 3572 and the forthcoming -1 amendments. Referred to as the EMS Modernization Bill Part 2. The bill brings consolidated structure, comprehensive representation of the entire profession and realistic 10 year goals that are reported back to the Legislature.

Most of our membership are emergency medical technicians of a variety of levels and interact with a large section of Oregonians and its visitors every day. This Bill directs the Oregon Health Authority to gather data on how many EMS professionals we have in the state and further determine how we practice. There are many ways to provide EMS and the roles of EMT's are expanding, home health care, out of hospital and post hospital care of a non-emergency occurrence. EMS is the epitome of essential service and needs proper information to do it correctly. It certainly is not a one size fits all occupation. Whether you are career, volunteer, private, government, non-profit there is ample opportunity to make this better. We think this bill adds to the first round of laws passed last session.

We believe the upcoming -1 amendments address our original concerns and clarifies where the revenue comes from. Study GEMT, the first real monies added to government EMS providers in my 40 years of being a paramedic. It also addresses QAF, the fund is similar in nature to GEMT for private ambulance providers.

We are excited to see the regional approach to funding innovation. As stated in my earlier testimony, one size does not fit all in Oregon EMS. The ability to develop regional answers with significant monies is important in taking care of Time Sensitive Emergencies (TSE). This approach will be a model for the rest of the country to emulate and improve on.

This proposal also has built in accountability with reporting requirements and oversight that holds the plan accountable.

A significant portion of the bill would direct the State Fire Marshal to administer the statewide Ambulance Mobilization Plan as is done for fire resources in the event of a conflagration or major emergency. Having a tried and high performing agency responsible for this essential service is one of the bills major strengths and attributes.

The date specific 10-year plan is a measurable item that will evaluate and recommend a course for the success of EMS in Oregon. Financial, workforce, community expectations, date management, governance, rural and metropolitan service goals are the main areas of focus.

This bill is the next step in providing realistic goals, comprehensive and complete participation of all areas of EMS, street level EMT's, administration, physicians, allied health professionals with clear direction and purpose, ultimately to better care in patient emergency's across the entire state.

We firmly believe that House Bill 3572, with the inclusion of the -1 amendments, will bring about a transformative change to the EMS landscape in Oregon. It will streamline processes, ensure adequate funding, and promote regional solutions tailored to the diverse needs of our state. By advancing this bill, we are taking a significant step towards enhancing emergency medical services, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes and a more resilient healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council

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