

Submitter:

Jason Herring

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4074

I strongly oppose this legislation in that it would significantly weaken hospital staffing of nurses and certified nurse assistants throughout the state. The legislation through its impact would effectively nullify most hospital nurse staffing plans and hospitals would resort to the minimum staffing required under law, rather than agree to safe staffing levels based on the needs and flow of patients within a hospital department. Effectively, hospitals would no longer be required to compromise with staff and agree on safe staffing levels. Instead, hospitals could refuse to negotiate or refuse to compromise and staffing levels would revert to the bare minimums under law. This is the hope and desire of the Hospital lobby in this state, to reduce staffing to the most basic levels allowed by law regardless of patient needs or its impact on nurses and certified nursing assistants. In a state that operates in a biennium with a citizen part time legislature, this makes the Oregon Nurse Staffing law unworkable because in order to change staffing level minimums, nurse and patient advocates would need to go to the legislature (likely during the long session once every two years) to lobby for changes to the minimum staffing levels set in the law. Not only would changes to safe staffing levels be slow, but through the legislative process, the powerful hospital lobby would be able to strongly push against changes to staffing levels. This actually makes hospital's less nimble and able to respond to staffing issues and creates unsafe situations for patients. This legislation would undo the hard work of the legislature to create safe hospital staffing and replace it with the fever dream of the Hospital lobby, profit based staffing decisions based on absolute minimum staffing requirements found in the Oregon Nurse Staffing law. The proponents of this legislation are blatant in what they are trying to do, they actually propose increasing medical/surgical patient to nurse ratios as a part of the legislation.

This proposed legislation to effectively nullify major portions of Oregon's best in the nation nurse staffing law is not just bad public policy and bad law, it is bad for both hospitals and patients, it is bad for the hospital staff and those who care for those patients. This is not a solution, this creates more problems. I urge a NO vote on this proposed legislation.