

Submitter: Lauren Heath
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074
Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4074

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Nelson and Diehl, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Lauren Heath. I am a NICU RN and have worked as a registered nurse for about 4 years. I currently work at Kaiser Permanente Sunnyside in Clackamas, OR, and I am a member of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP AFT-5017). I am writing in strong opposition to HB 4074.

Every day, I provide direct patient care, and the nurse staffing law passed in 2023 has a real impact on my ability to do my job safely and effectively. HB 4074 would make significant changes to the enforcement of that law. If passed, I would not be able to provide the care to critically ill neonates as I currently do.

HB 2697 was the result of years of research, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement. Rushing through changes to the statute will only put providers and patients at risk. Advancing HB 4074 now would shortcut that process and risk unintended consequences that cannot be fully evaluated in the limited time available. From my experience, the current law is working as intended, and barriers to passing plans are rooted in unwillingness to utilize escalation and acuity tools. Hospitals were given ample time to comply, and the vast majority have done so. Unsafe staffing in particular affects EVERYONE, especially the patient's care and health.

Weakening enforcement through delayed penalties or reduced accountability would effectively suspend the law without the thoughtful analysis such changes demand. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 4074 as currently written.

Thank you,
Lauren Heath