



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 23, 2023

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation – HB 2757B

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Please accept this explanation of my NAY vote on HB 2757B. I am absolutely in support of the 9-8-8 suicide prevention behavioral health crisis hotline. However, I have concerns with the newly added tax contained in HB 2757B.

The new tax consists of 40¢ per line per month, totaling approximately \$27.4 million per year or \$32.9 million for the 2023-25 biennium. This new tax will be the highest in the nation along with Washington. For other context, Nevada's 9-8-8 tax is \$0.35, Colorado is \$0.27, Virginia is \$0.12, and California is only at \$0.08 per line per month. 44 states have no phone tax for 9-8-8 services yet somehow, they are providing this service. The population of Oregon is greater than that of Nevada. So, the need for a higher tax due to lower population and the ability to generate revenue based on population is not a viable argument.

Additionally, there is funding for the 9-8-8 program within the agency budget using general funds, so this tax is simply additional funding with very loose guidelines as to what it will be used for.

Finally, the bill as written could be brought back at any time before the sunset date and the rate raised with a simple majority vote.

We need 9-8-8, but this is the wrong way to go about it. In a time when the state is flush with money why are we doing a new tax?

I opposed HB 2757B due to the above reasons and believe there is a better way to support this program without imposing a new tax.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A Scharf".

Anna Scharf
State Representative – HD 23