FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2011

Oregon Nurses Association Denounces Wisconsin State Senate For Stripping Public Employee Unions of Collective Bargaining Rights

Tualatin, OR – The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) denounces the Wisconsin State Senate for the recent vote stripping public employees of crucial collective bargaining rights. The bill, which was passed on Wednesday, was an altered version of a much larger budget bill. In order to bypass rules requiring a quorum for any vote on a measure with budget implications, Republicans in the state Senate hastily devised a new bill targeting only key collective bargaining rights of public employees.

“There is no question that this vote reflects the true meaning of the efforts of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. This was never about balancing the state budget, it has always been meant as an attack on the rights of unions and the rights of union members to have a voice in their workplace. It is shameful and shocking,” said Paul Goldberg, Assistant Executive Director of Labor Relations.

Across the country, state nursing associations and the National Federation of Nurses (the national union which represents more than 75,000 registered nurses nationwide) are coming forward to condemn the Wisconsin vote. Susan King, Executive Director of ONA, said, “Nurses across the nation are outraged at what is happening in Wisconsin. Hundreds of dedicated, passionate and professional nurses in that state have had their hard-won rights ripped away. The implications are frightening, not only for the nurses but also for patient safety and the delivery of quality health care.”

Systematic efforts to weaken the rights of labor unions are not isolated to Wisconsin. Similar measures are underway in Ohio, New Jersey and New York State. “The Oregon Nurses Association stands proudly with our union colleagues across America whose rights are under threat,” said Goldberg.

The Oregon Nurses Association is the voice for nursing in Oregon. With more than 12,500 members, it is the state’s largest professional association and union for registered nurses. It supports nurses and nursing practice through education, research, legislative advocacy, and collective bargaining.