

To: House Health Care Committee
From: Jennifer Granera
RE: HB 3075

Chairs Salinas, vice chairs Nosse and Hayden, members of the committee,

For the record my name is Jennifer Granera, and I am an SEIU 503 member. I am a Department of Human Services worker in Salem. My spouse is a Department of Corrections worker in Salem and has been for the last 18 years. I love my job, and I have done this work for 14 years because I am committed to serving Oregon's most vulnerable populations on their journey to becoming self-sufficient. My husband makes a fundamental difference in reducing recidivism by teaching skills to Oregon's inmate population such as landscaping, building maintenance, small engine service and runs a welding program.

I am here today to ask you to restore coordinated spousal coverage for public service workers like me, by supporting House Bill 3075. The decision to take this benefit away only from workers whose spouses also work in public service is fundamentally unfair and will have serious consequences for my family.

We are a blended family of five children. Four of the five children have chronic medical issues that require frequent Doctor visits both with primary and specialty Doctors, and medication. The stress of managing our children's on-going care has been a heavy burden on us as a couple. However, we lean on each other for support and our double insurance to ease the financial burden. Let me be very clear, we still have overages that the insurance doesn't cover. If we did not have both insurances I don't know how our family would be able to sustain the level of care our children receive.

Because of our double insurance, my daughter who suffered a devastating tumor called a Juvenile Ossifying Fibroma when she was eleven was able to have a reconstruction surgery that changed her life, actually it changed all of our lives. We were told we had to wait until she was eighteen to move forward with the surgery to ensure she had stopped growing. During high-school she struggled with depression and low self-esteem. She was withdrawn and stayed hidden. The worst time with her was when she was suicidal because she hated herself so much because of the effects the tumor had on her body. The summer she graduated we moved forward with her reconstructive surgery. The results both physically and mentally for her are more than we could have hoped for. She is now a freshman at Oregon State University pursuing a medical career because she wants to make a difference and share her story. She smiles and takes selfies! She has joined a Sorority and enjoys being with other young people. She is thriving

as a young adult and will make an impact on the world around her. If we did not have the double insurance to support our family, sadly her surgery would not have been possible. Financially, we couldn't have afforded it and would have had to make a decision between using all of our resources towards one child while taking away from the other three who have on going expenses. We are considering having one of us leave state service to ensure we are able to support our children with medical care that will no longer be possible through our existing jobs.

The work that my colleagues and I do is important, and we don't do it for the money. However, when you take away benefits from only workers who are committed to public services, but not others, you are creating an inequity in our workplaces and making public service less and less attractive. I am asking you to restore our ability to make our own decisions about how our family is insured.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to this issue.

Jennifer Granera
Operations and Policy Analyst 2
Salem, OR

