

Chairs Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden, Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Jodie MacLean, and I am an SEIU 503 - Chapter 89 member. I am a Portland State University employee, while my spouse is a Portland Community College employee, both in Portland. I love my job, and I have done this work for 19 and ½ years, because I believe that a quality education is a right for all Oregonians, and helps make our State prosperous.

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, including increases in prescription drug co-pays. Not to mention what this will cost our employers who will now be required to cover us separately instead of jointly.

The Legislatures repeated failure to adequately fund Higher Education have put institutions into the difficult position of having to balance tuition increases for students against funding adequate salaries for staff & faculty. Repeated years where the salary increase for classified staff has been below the rate of inflation has eroded the value of my salary from where it was when I joined PSU in 1999. One of the things that helped offset this was the incentive payment available when either myself or my spouse opted out of employer provided health-care as the other had coverage available through PEBB and/or OEGB. As the projected budget for higher education is once again well below what is needed, we are faced with the double whammy of another year with below inflation COLA's and the removal of the incentive adding up to another pay cut for the upcoming year.

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.

Jodie MacLean

Executive Assistant

Portland State University SEIU Local 89