

To: House Committee on Health Care
From: Stephanie Tunelli
RE: HB 3075

House Committee Members,

For the record my name is Stephanie Tunelli and I am an SEIU 503 member as well as a Bureau of Labor and Industries worker in Eugene. My spouse is an Oregon Department of Transportation worker in Springfield. I am passionate about the work I do to serve Oregonians in my role as an Apprenticeship Representative with the State of Oregon and have worked in State employment for nearly 10 years.

I am writing this letter 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.

My husband and I are parents to a two-year-old and recently learned that we are expecting twins. We have done the math and learned that daycare costs for three young children will eat up my entire paycheck. Now, without the spousal double-coverage, I do not see a way that we will afford the healthcare bills for a family of five. My first child experienced frequent ear infections that required many visits to the pediatrician and antibiotics. The unexpected bills from the doctor would have been too much for our new family without the full spousal healthcare benefits provided to us as public sector workers.

Now the prospect of not having dual-coverage for our entire family has forced my husband and I to have some difficult conversations about the long-term feasibility of us both working for the State. We already earn less income than those in the private sector, but have chosen our paths because we genuinely believe in the work we do. We know that one of us could easily enter the private sector and see our full coverage restored, because that is how insurance coverage will work in *all* industries outside of the State and education.

I cannot stress enough how much I love my job as an Apprenticeship Representative. I feel that I have found my calling in aiding the citizens of Oregon prepare for future workforce demands through the trades. Unfortunately, my skills are more transferrable than those of my husband and my husband and we decided that I would be the more likely candidate to find work in the private sector. I spoke to my Operations Manager two months ago, before learning about HB 3075, and let her know that in 2020 I would seek work outside of the State of Oregon should duplicate health coverage be eliminated. I am just one example of the talent that will leave public service should coordinated spousal coverage be restored.

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. The introduction of HB 3075 has given me new hope that I may continue to serve Oregon through the work that I do and I implore you to consider the harm that SB 1067 will cause to young families like mine.

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

Stephanie Tunelli
Apprenticeship Representative and proud Oregonian
Eugene

