



To: Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Sharf, and members of the committee

From: Anthony Castaneda, SEIU Local 503

Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

RE: SEIU Local 503 supports HB 2804

My name is Anthony Castaneda, and I am writing on behalf of **SEIU Local 503 in support of HB 2804** relating to the utilization of workload models and annual reporting for workforce capacity and needs. SEIU Local 503 represents over 72,000 workers statewide, including nearly 10,000 workers at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

HB 2804 would require the Department of Human Services to:

- 1. Use workload models to assess the workforce capacity and needs in each division of each department.**
- 2. Report the findings of the report to the Oregon legislative assembly relating to human services no later than February 1st of each year.**

Currently our members at ODHS report unsustainably high workloads in every program. When caseloads are high, there are direct impacts to workers and to Oregonians trying to access services. For many programs, it can result in application backlogs that impact people's ability to receive benefits or services. Agencies are having difficulty with retention and recruitment, resulting in higher workload for the remaining staff and often in higher amounts of overtime. The folks who work at ODHS are incredibly passionate about the work that they do, and at their core want to ensure that they are delivering the best possible service to Oregonians across our state.

The adoption of the workload model approach will help the Agency better plan for and manage caseloads, and help the Legislature have important data to understand staffing and capacity needs. Unmanageable workloads and expectations are the biggest factors influencing worker turnover and retention. When providing child welfare services, our members need to spend enough time with families and their children to understand and develop a case plan to support the household. When determining eligibility, workers need to ensure they get complete and accurate information so they can enroll people for all of the services they are eligible for.

Our members report that it's difficult to do this when under extreme pressure from high caseloads. The workload model determines the appropriate quantity and type of cases for frontline workers during a specified period. Manageable caseloads will improve retention at the agency and the quality services delivered to vulnerable populations in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please direct any questions or comments to castaneda@seiu503.org.

Many thanks,

Anthony Castaneda